THE WORLDS BEST BOOK OF MINSTRELSY

HERBERT PRESTON POWELL

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The World's Best Book of Minstrelsy

By

HERBERT PRESTON POWELL

791

Illustrated by

CHARLES CLARK

Full instructions for producing, with complete first parts and Specialties

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The World's Best Book of Minstrelsy

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The World's Best Book of Minstrelsy

FOREWORD

In presenting this book, the author's purpose has been to remove from the path of the amateur minstrel impresario the pitfalls that lie before him, and to slay the bugbears that lurk in the shadows to devour his handiwork.

Much care has been taken to give complete instructions, not only in casting the production, but also in forming the equally important organization that does not appear before the footlights.

It is hoped that these instructions will make the burdens of the amateur entertainer light, and that the script itself will prove entertaining and satisfactory.

PART I

HOW TO PRODUCE AN AMATEUR MINSTREL SHOW

CHAPTER I

WHY AMATEUR MINSTRELS ARE SUCCESSFUL

No one, standing in the lobby of a theatre on an evening that an amateur minstrel performance has been in progress and watching the laughing crowds pouring into the streets, some humming the song hits, some retelling a joke that has a particularly personal appeal, and the whole audience patently pleased beyond the point displayed by a similar exodus from a genuine professional performance—no one can deny that amateur minstrels *are* successful.

Of course, the success, or measure of success attained, is wholly due to two things—two things, without which all the talent in the world would appear uninteresting and tiresome,—without which the financial as well as the artistic success would be doomed. In fact, it may safely be said that if these two things are not understood and appreciated, the whole venture would better be abandoned at the outset.

The two things responsible for the success of an amateur minstrel production are hard work and attention to detail. Given the proper material, a group that carefully builds up a smoothly working executive organization, departmentalized to the smallest degree, will evolve a production that will

send the amused spectator home with the satisfied feeling that his money has been well spent, and that his investment in time has been highly remunerative. Not only this, but those in charge of that vital department Publicity should so excite the imagination of their customers that the strains of the opening chorus will fall on a pleasingly large assortment of not over-critical ears, while the hard working crew of end-men will be greeted by an expectant audience that asks but little of the amateur show, but wants that little funny.

It would seem to be a paradox that amateur minstrels are perennially popular, but that the professional brother no longer thrives. The explanation is, of course, that the comparatively new vaudeville entertainment supplies a variety greatly superior to the old minstrel show, while the amateur minstrel is able to so closely approximate the results of his professional progenitor that he actually delivers a really superior brand of goods for considerably less money.

Assurance, if any be desired, that the amateur minstrel can be artistically successful, is to be had by considering the requirements, which call for a minimum of dramatic ability and experience before footlights. The very nature of the opening act, or first part, which incidentally consumes nearly one-half of the total running time of the performance, during which only the Interlocutor moves about during the dialogue, and the fact that the other members who have solos or specialty interpolations

have to stand for only a few minutes while they "do their bit" precludes the possibility of failure, because of its meager demands upon the capabilities of individual participants.

Consequently, all members of the cast become emboldened by their success, and the glaring footlights losing their first terror, the disciples of burnt cork step out with all assurance during the second half of the entertainment, going through their paces even more alertly, and easily meeting the demands for increased speed and "pep" which its more vaudevillian nature requires.

The proper material is very easily procurable; the hard work can only come from within, but the attention to detail can easily be acquired, and it is the purpose of the succeeding chapters to take these details in logical order and set forth a few rule of thumb processes which, if followed, will insure a minimum of mistakes and misunderstandings and a maximum of satisfaction and success.

CHAPTER II

THE CHAIRMAN

CHURCHES are like children and fraternal orders are like motor-cars,—certain vital parts are constantly wearing out, and funds must be forthcoming at stated intervals to replace worn and torn equipment. This problem of replacement will ever remain a source of worry to those invaluable souls who somehow seem to take such things to themselves as their personal problems, and their periodical perplexity as to the raising of funds for this thing or that is a matter that few easy-going folk either appreciate or understand.

Constant repetition of the problem has taught the "go-getters" in fraternal, charitable or ecclesiastical circles that certain forms of endeavor not only entail a great deal of hard work, but that they actually do not return a fair "profit" on the investment of time and labor. Bazaars have come to be symbols of pride-abasing begging for the stock in trade,—weeks upon weeks of building booths, decorating the buildings, worry of every sort and description, and finally a solid week of constant attendance that wearies the body and tires the soul. Suppers come next in the black list, followed closely by pageants, dinner dances, and kindred forms of comparatively unremunerative endeavors.

Inversely, the same specialists in raising funds have found out that the dramatic entertainment not only finds a host of willing helpers, but that it will return more actual dollars net profit than anything else that can be attempted. And so it is that nowadays the amateur performance is regarded with warm affection by fun-promoters, and the minstrel easily tops the list of eligibles along this line.

Assuming that the process of elimination has caused the choice of a minstrel show as the means of raising funds, the first step to be taken is to elect to the Chair some individual with known ability as an organizer, a mixer, a leader and the possessor of a high order of executive ability. This election made, it may be confidently assumed that everyone who can do anything will be shortly doing it, and doing it not only capably, but willingly. At the first meeting of the Committee after the Chairman has begun to function, he will guide his assistants along prearranged paths—for the meeting must be mapped out thoroughly in advance—to the end that the various lieutenants will get an impression of superior ability at the head of the undertaking, and a consequent sense of security as to the final successful outcome.

Realizing that the work to be accomplished will have to be done in addition to the regular business of life, the chairman will split up his tasks into as many divisions as possible, so that no one will feel the burden, and will be able to accomplish his assignment efficiently and on time.

Appointments are made of an Advertising Manager, who sells space in the program; a Treasurer, who attends to the ticket problem in all its ramifications, from printing to passes; a Press-Agent whose ingenuity will govern the amount of interest built up for the venture; a Property Man, who will see to it that needed "props" are available when required; a Wardrobe Master who arranges for costumes; a Stage Director whose guiding hand and artistic sense will weave a pattern of pleasant performance; a Musical Director, whose duties are obvious; a Stage Manager, who will enlist and drill a working force backstage, and a scenic artist if orthodox scenery is not available.

This is an outline of organization that needs little explanation and no defence. No possible addition to the above outlined staff will add a bit to the effectiveness of the ensemble, and while each lieutenant will of necessity require his individual sergeants, corporals and buck privates, it may be safely taken for granted that no other commissions need be assigned.

CHAPTER III

PRELIMINARY PLANS

At the very first cabinet meeting certain things should be decided definitely if possible, and tentatively if a final decision cannot be reached. One thing that should be impressed at this point is that nothing should ever be put off unless it is simply impossible to be settled finally at the time it is under discussion. The time is limited, or should be, for a long-drawn-out period of preparation usually results in the whole affair going stale.

First the date and place of performance should be decided upon, for the importance of these two items is manifest and requires no emphasis. Regarding the time, a careful check should be made as to the possibility of rival attractions on any date tentatively selected. This can be obtained either from newspaper editors or managers of amusement houses. Set attractions such as the movies, minor professional theatrical performances, etc., need not be taken into consideration, for they are persistent and obtain regularly throughout the whole season. On the other hand, stellar attractions such as a great actor, singer or musical comedy, or any yearly local function that is known in advance to attract a large audience that you also wish to attract, should be seriously considered and studiously avoided.

The best day for the first performance is Friday,

and the initial showing should take place on Friday night. This permits a Saturday matinee, which draws the school-children's trade. Three performances are generally considered enough for many reasons, and unless the drawing power of the beneficiary is unusual, this should be the limit of attempted showings.

Set the date of performance three weeks from the first rehearsal, and drive confidently to that goal, for this permits a sufficient amount of time for rounding out an acceptably finished product; spurs the cast on with the realization that hard work is essential, and also that withdrawal from circulation among favored haunts will be of short duration.

The place of performance should be governed by two things—the quality of the performance to be given, which is forecast by the known abilities of the cast that is assembled, and the strength of the organization that is to benefit from the proceeds to attract patronage.

Powerful fraternal organizations, such as the Elks, Masons, Knights of Columbus, etc., naturally suggest the legitimate theatre, while churches, boy scout troops and less influential societies will find fair sized auditoriums more suited to their needs and pocketbooks.

At the time that the theatre or hall is engaged, provision should be made for a dress rehearsal on the night preceding the performance, for while another idea is advanced in a later chapter for a dress rehearsal which provides some helpful publicity, it

does not afford the indispensable familiarity with the stage where the actual performance is to be given, and is, therefore, supplemental to, rather than a substitute for the well-known and always expected dress rehearsal upon the actual scene of the intended performance.

While at the first meeting of the staff it may be found impracticable to decide these two vital matters without further inquiry and consideration, they should by all means be settled tentatively, and confirmed at the next meeting without fail.

CHAPTER IV

FORESTALLING COMPLAINTS

MANY a successful amateur performance has been a failure in the sense that in its wake were scattered the remains of many previously warm friendships, and the breaking down of confidence in the minds of certain personages or near personages as to the unbiased conduct of the affair. Inasmuch as such things obviously should not be in the case of a "benefit," it is wise to consider the means of avoiding hard feelings in the breasts of anyone that comes in contact with your particular affair.

To avoid all misunderstandings is impossible without the aid of a lawyer assisted by a court-reporter, but much embarrassment can be avoided by keeping in mind a few simple expedients. One of the easiest methods of satisfying pride of the personnel is to devote one page of the program to wholesouled credits for all help rendered; for all contributions received, and for every bit of aid rendered in any way. These credits should give the names (carefully spelled) and the part played by the owner thereof in the success of the undertaking.

Give credit to everyone who assists in the slightest measure to make the affair successful. See that every performer is mentioned and that his name is correctly spelled, and also do the small courtesy of

gratefully acknowledging all contributions and loans of such things as pianos, furniture, etc., etc., etc.

In this connection, when anyone offers to "take care" of some needed item, find out gently, but firmly, if this "care" means that there will be no cost attached, and, if not, ascertain the exact amount to be expended before committing yourself to the cost. Many times a well-meaning friend who is in some business that can supply needed articles offers to "get them for you" meaning that he can save a little money by taking advantage of a trade discount, while your interpretation, colored by your desires, might construe it as an outright donation.

All expenditures should be approved by the Treasurer or Chairman, and the Chair should have it thoroughly understood from the beginning that no one is to make any financial commitments under any circumstances, without proper authority. Written bids should be called for on any contracts for supplies of any consequence, and receipts should be diplomatically insisted upon for all expenditures.

These are the shoals surrounding the channel that floats the ship of success, and inasmuch as they are known and charted, there is really no excuse for any vessel, large or small, for going aground on the rocks of ignorance. The pilot surely can avoid a known danger. There is no excuse if he doesn't.

CHAPTER V

THE PROGRAM

THE program for amateur entertainments generally is supposed to bear the burden of its own cost, and even to do a little better than that. Indeed, there is no reason that it should not, for it provides a very happy advertising medium for merchants as well as others who are seeking to have their various wares or services better known, for the theatre-goer is notoriously an advertisement reader, and the advertiser who gets his card in the amateur minstrel show program is assured that he will receive his money's worth, plus.

The responsibility for the program, its ads. and its make-up, rests on the shoulders of the Advertising Manager. If possible, an experienced canvasser should be assigned to this job, or at least one with an intimate knowledge of program ads. in general. If he, or she, should have a large acquaintance among merchants, and a little influence into the bargain, so much the better, but by all means select for this post one who has the most known ability along this line.

Lacking an experienced advertising manager, the generally accepted method of soliciting program ads. is to have a "dummy" prepared, neatly ruled into sections of different sizes with "reading matter" in the center of each page, except one or two choice

pages which are to be sold as full page ads. This instrument is then circulated among a selected list of prospects,—selected because they either have an interest in the undertaking,—are making some small profit out of it through sale of props or supplies of any kind,—or merely are under obligations to the beneficiary. Frankly, some of them buy space simply to keep the good will of their customers, and no attempt should be made to prevent spaces in the program being sold because that might be the reason for the purchase.

The sale of the ad. spaces should be begun immediately, although the actual printing of the program is deferred until three or four days before they are to be used, to permit any unexpected changes caused either by sickness, stubbornness or sulkiness, or the addition of some unexpected feature.

Be sure to first consult with the printer as to the cost of composition and printing of the completed program, including advertisements, before deciding what prices the various spaces should bring in order to show a profit on the venture. Also it should be mentioned here that the printer should have the honor of purchasing the first space, or another printer selected who will be willing to reciprocate in the matter of business. Still further should it be impressed upon the advertising manager that all people who sell anything *to* the production should buy something *from* the production,—viz.: ads. and tickets.

CHAPTER VI

TICKETS

NEEDLESS to say, the ticket end of the performance ranks equal in importance to the performance itself. At times, for no understandable reason, the sale of tickets is attempted in a haphazard manner, with the inevitable result that the sale is haphazard in results. Only the strictest attention and the hardest possible work will put the ticket sale across, and consequently it should be entrusted to someone who is capable of contributing these two factors to its accomplishment.

It is a hard, usually thankless job, but fortunately there always appears someone who is willing to tackle it, and it is a matter of record that in the majority of cases such a volunteer generally has the talent necessary to successfully handle the situation that he applies for.

In considering the things to be guarded against in this department, it should be remembered that it is distressingly simple to leave off some important bit of information from the copy given the printer for the tickets, and as printers have an age-old passion for following copy, all errors and omissions always come out in cold clear print. Remember that tickets should bear—the title of the performance, the name of the beneficiary, the place of performance, the date, the hour the curtain rises, the price and

the regulation "Admit One." Check these points carefully against your copy, and then have someone else recheck it.

As to the number of tickets to be printed, it is best to err, if at all, on the side of too many rather than too few. Many a well-ordered performance has proved a financial " flop " wholly because timid souls thought that so many tickets would be more than enough, not taking into consideration that many tickets are printed that are never sold, and that many that are sold are never presented at the door for redemption in the way of a seat in the auditorium. A reasonable working out of the problem is to multiply the seating capacity of the auditorium by two and one-half, printing that number and selling every one if possible. No worry need be devoted to the possibility of more people applying for seats than there are seats. A large percentage of tickets sold for any amateur performance are never presented at the ticket-taker's wicket, and there are always a few seats vacant to accommodate the latest customers.

As to the proper price to be charged for tickets, this is a question that can only be decided by dividing the estimated cost of production by the number of tickets that a reasonable estimate suggests can be sold, adding the Federal Amusement tax, and multiplying the result by all that the traffic will bear. Don't underestimate the worth of your performance, but at the same time, don't overestimate the purchasing power of your individual public.

A favorite device of experienced ticket chairmen is to organize the sales campaign by electing "captains" over several groups, each with a lieutenant and a group of from five to fifteen cadets, and by playing up the team spirit, and making a race of it, get the desired results in the way of quantity production.

An account book should be started at the time the tickets are given out, and a careful check kept at all times, showing names of holders, and credit for all money turned in, as anything short of perfect bookkeeping will result in chaos and loss of actual cash when the final recapitulation is attempted.

It has been told that in the olden days, before the advent of the printing press, strolling players used ivory or bone checks for tickets, and that the complimentary passes were fashioned after the human skull. Whence the term "dead-head." All of this by way of leading up to the fact that complimentary tickets should be given out sparingly by the ticket chairman, and, beyond the ones sent editors of coöperating newspapers,—artists who are donating their services (and by this is meant semi-professionals who usually are paid for their appearance) and hard-working but unsung members of the organization, these pasteboards should be doled out in a very economical fashion.

CHAPTER VII

PUBLICITY

"TELLING the world"—your own immediate world, that is, of your forthcoming performance,—telling it loud and telling it often—is vitally necessary to the financial success of the undertaking, and is best accomplished by a man or woman experienced in publicity.

Usually some man or woman interested in the organization for whose benefit the amateur performance is to be given, has the required experience and will gladly take over this portfolio. The advertising consultant or the advertising manager of some department store is particularly fitted for this most important office in the "Cabinet," as he or she not only knows how to sell ideas to the public, but knows and has influence in newspaper circles to get his or her copy in print.

The newspaper should be utilized at every available opportunity, and the progress of the venture kept regularly before the public with all the ingenuity that the Chairman of Publicity commands. An effective, and at the same time moderate schedule, is as follows:

First news-story: Midweek announcement of the contemplated performance, giving name of beneficiary, probable date and place of performance, names of chairman and staff, with thumb-nail

sketches of their former achievements in handling amateur theatricals, if any.

Second news-story: (Sunday) Setting forth beginning of rehearsals with names of principal singers and comedians played up mildly, and a list of the entire cast also shown. This is made more effective by a group picture of the entire cast,—staff and all, and if this is not practical individual photos of the stage director, music director, best known comedian and most popular vocalist may be used.

Third news-story: Midweek announcement of "Extraordinary Engagement" of some feature of the performance. An amateur jazz-band with characteristic photo can hardly be improved upon. Rehash main facts regarding beneficiary, time and place of performance, and give names of executive staff, or play up the "teams" that will handle the ticket assignment.

Fourth news-story: Sunday announcement of probable pre-view of performance, gratis for some orphanage, old soldiers' home, or some other charity institution during the following week. Incidentally this idea affords the troupe an opportunity to "try it on the dog," as the saying is in theatrical circles, under indulgent eyes, and serves the double purpose of a dress rehearsal, and an opportunity to smooth off rough spots under mild fire.

Final news-story: Set forth "polished performance" given inmates of orphanage, or whatever institution witnessed the pre-view, with due credit to stage and musical directors. Play up strong ad-

vance sale of tickets; where more tickets can be secured; time curtain rises on first performance; time of street parade, if any, and, if possible, flash-light of ensemble at dress rehearsal.

Depending upon the pretentiousness of the affair, either bill-boards or window-cards should be employed. The former are, of course, somewhat expensive, and should only be used where a big "gate" is certain. The window-cards, however, are inexpensive, and merchants are usually willing to display them prominently in their show-windows. The cards should contain information as to nature of performance, beneficiary, time and place of performance, and price of tickets.

It is a good plan to have printed between five and ten thousand hand-dodgers of a lively nature, and on the day before the performance organize groups of boys for distribution. Free passes will be sufficient pay to the "crew."

Have local sign painter print several "banners" with strings fastened to them so that the banners may be attached to the rear curtains of several automobiles, and have these cars driven constantly through town by attractive girls.

Lantern slides are easily made, and one or a series may be employed, with comic drawings to make them more effective, and thrown on the screens of the most popular movie houses. Special rates will probably be accorded by house managers.

Remember also that the space given by newspapers for readers actually costs them money, and that

a newspaper purveys news for the profit it brings them. Yours will be no new attempt to "work" them, and they cannot be expected to show your natural enthusiasm. Therefore, a few dollars for orthodox advertising in the newspaper is not only politic, but a very good paying investment. Use at least three paid insertions, advising in each where tickets can be secured, as well as giving the regular information as to time, place, etc.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROPERTY MAN

THE work of the property man in the minstrel performance is a very simple one compared to a like office in a dramatic entertainment, for the gentleman who has charge of minstrel props will not have to produce the wide variety of bric-à-brac that most dramas require. Indeed, the property man in the minstrel show not only has an easy time of it compared to his dramatic brother, but, as a matter of fact, has just about the simplest job that is connected with his own particular show, for he, at least, is given a definite list of things that he must procure, and so it may be honestly said that barring accidents he can be depended upon to have his assignment completed in ample time for the show.

The simplest method of procedure for the Master of Properties to pursue is to procure the manuscript, read it carefully, making notes every time he discovers any particular article specified,—check this prop list with the Stage Director, adding such articles as that gentleman desires for original interpolations. He should also be careful to list the number of chairs needed, the number of wigs and such cosmetics as are indicated by experience. He should also attend every rehearsal, continually checking up the action against his list, and running over and

over in his mind the things that he has procured, and the things that are still to be gotten.

As soon as the theatre is settled upon, he should confer with the Stage Manager thereof, and determine what part of his needs may be filled from the house's regular equipment, and assemble around this nucleus the balance of impedimenta required.

In metropolitan cities, supply houses may be found who rent stage furniture and necessities, while in towns and cities where these emporiums do not exist merchants will be found who will either lend or rent chairs, furniture, etc. As a last resort, borrowing from friends may be resorted to, although this should be avoided if possible, for many heartaches have been started on account of this practice, because stage hands have a casual manner, and a prop is to them but a prop, whether it be a deal kitchen table or a fine Sheraton bit.

Props that might become soiled by handling should be kept in specially made bags or boxes, while miscellaneous small props for each scene or act should be kept together religiously, so that all confusion may be avoided when the time comes for their use.

CHAPTER IX

THE WARDROBE MASTER

THE organization that seeks to make impossible any oversights; that wants to be sure that there will be a place for everything and everything in its place; that desires to await the opening overture on the first night with a mind untroubled with last minute panics that destroy morale and upset mental balance, will do well to appoint a Master or Mistress of Wardrobe, whose duty it is to see that the costumes agreed upon are ordered in time for delivery sufficiently in advance of the performance to permit necessary altering and fitting.

The costuming of the minstrel show requires a great deal of thought and care, but it can be accomplished at a minimum of expense if necessary. Inasmuch as the second half of the program is of an easy-go-lucky nature, individuals can usually outfit themselves from their personal assortment of old clothes, except those who are to impersonate female characters, and who will therefore require the mature counsel and able assistance of some lady in concocting suitable costumes.

The first part, however, cannot be so easily disposed of, since it is an unwritten law that the costumes must be uniform, and no individuality permitted to flaunt itself above the tout ensemble. As

said before, the first part costumes may be as simple or elaborate as desired, running from blue coats and white duck trousers to canary silk or satin knee breeches and tunics, ruffs, brocaded waistcoats, silk stockings, red-heeled patent leather slippers and white wigs. The white duck of the jolly tar gives a happy effect if a scene can be procured to carry out the nautical thought. Full dress military uniforms lend a touch of grandeur if they can be borrowed from some state militia organization that sports a particularly dressy uniform.

But, no matter what detail of costuming is finally decided upon, the whole matter should be instantly placed in capable hands for completion, and except for the natural interest of the executive head of the production, religiously left alone by others on the staff,—unless advice or help is solicited by the Wardrobe Master or Mistress.

CHAPTER X

THE DIRECTOR

HERE is a chapter that is more than a chapter. Here is a job that is infinitely more than just a task. Here is an assignment that is of such tremendous importance that too great stress cannot be laid upon it, nor too much thought be devoted to the best solution of the problem—which is the appointment of the Stage Director.

Just as two artists can look at the same view and transfer it to paper or canvas and turn out two conceptions as unlike as possible, just so can two men take a minstrel script and produce two shows that are as dissimilar as can be. A palette doesn't make an artist, and the best script in the world doesn't make a show. David Belasco will turn out a production that transports its hearers to another sphere, and then some stock director in the provinces will take the same play and produce a humdrum affair that causes its patrons to wonder how in the world such a thing made a hit in New York.

Truly, the artistic success of any theatrical performance rests entirely upon one who is not seen by the audience at all,—yet whose influence they feel constantly during the performance. The Director! Should he prove inadequate—should he be a weakling—should he not be a good disciplinarian—should he lack a positive nature, a wholesome knowledge of

the nature of others, and a personality that compels, either willingly or grudgingly, implicit obedience to his leadership,—the curtain will rise on just another minstrel show. Should he possess these qualities, it will be, in the parlance of the show-world, a "wow."

Amateur casts are unruly casts. Capable members are temperamental—others are incorrigible—some incapable of being on time, particularly on the night of the performance—some appear unbelievably stupid, and others entirely too smart. Inattention seems to be the order of the night, and everyone seems to be in a conspiracy to see just how far a man's mind will be harassed before it gives way under the load.

The Director who would escape some part of this discomfiture should make it plain at the very first rehearsal that he is "boss around here" and calmly over-ride the objections of those who will otherwise become confirmed objectors. He should ignore the gratuitous suggestions of those who seek to do his work for him along entirely original lines of their own conceit.

The Director who succeeds needs no board of advisers, and should put down any well-meant attempts in this direction at the outset, for he is personally responsible for the success or failure of the action of the piece, and upon his taste, discretion and imagery depends the outcome. Therefore, he should insist upon an autocracy and elect himself autocrat. He is, in effect, the most critical patron who views the performance. He censures every misstep,

though for the benefit of the censured one, and all his criticisms should be received in the spirit made.

A knowledge of human nature is most helpful, for it is a gift to know which member of the cast to criticise before the rest, and which will work harder if approached after rehearsals. The best member of the cast will be made even better by intelligent criticism, and it should not be withheld simply because he is so much better than his brother performers. A word of praise, coupled with a constructive bit of criticism will go far to making the Star shine forth in even greater luminosity than ever before.

Rehearsals can't be run by a committee or by spectators. In fact, the committee has other work which should be occupying its undivided attention, and loitering friends are so very unnecessary that they should be excluded from the outset, and only admitted upon exhibiting and surrendering a bit of pasteboard to the ticket-taker between the hours of 7:45 and 8:15 on the night of the first performance. Visitors cannot be expected to see the whole pattern when the weaver is working on one small design, and their presence can easily cause him to drop a stitch or two, necessitating double work,—which cannot be afforded.

At the first rehearsal the Director should make a short talk, emphasizing the fact that the length of time allotted to rehearsals has been pared to a minimum in appreciation of the fact that the cast is going to give up other interests during that pe-

riod. He should then put the matter of rehearsal nights up for discussion, and when they are decided on insist firmly that every member of the cast pledge himself to one hundred per cent attendance, and that any violators will unhesitatingly be dropped from the personnel on the first offense. Sickness and real sickness at that will be the only excuse tolerated. And then, when the first careless gent thereafter decides that it was all in fun, and fails to show up on Wednesday, he should be promptly fired when he puts in his lackadaisical appearance on Friday. It won't become necessary to fire anyone else, but unless a fearless insistence is exhibited at the outset, rehearsals will be a joke, or rather a nightmare, with only a corporal's guard present to undertake the work.

Really, it isn't possible to lay too much stress upon the vital necessity of the Director's dictatorship, for a minstrel show means hard work, and hard work cannot be accomplished in union hours. Overtime with no extra pay does the trick.

CHAPTER XI

THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

THE Music Director should be not only a musician, but an extraordinary one. He should be a choral expert; an accompanist of sympathetic parts; an orchestra leader; skilled in transposing, and it wouldn't hurt if he were a composer to bind the bargain.

Most amateur minstrels wait until too late to get their music routine fixed—which is as nearly fatal a mistake as could possibly be made. When possible an orchestra, even as small as a string quartette, should be used, for nothing else produces such happy results or keeps the morale of the company up so easily. Where an orchestra is not possible two pianos in skillful hands, played en-duet, are a nearly acceptable substitute. By all means, the man who conducts at rehearsals and the men who play in the orchestra at these times should also perform at the actual performances. Orchestrations of any songs can be secured from the publishers of the sheet music at a very moderate cost, and should be procured, if possible, before rehearsals begin. Telegrams will be found to bring quick service in this connection. If the score is not to be had from the start, it should be positively in use not later than the third rehearsal.

At the first rehearsal, each member of the chorus should be supplied with a mimeographed sheet containing all the choruses that are to be sung during the entire show. Extra copies should be printed in abundance, so that forgetful souls at subsequent rehearsals will be taken care of.

The Music Director should be on the job at the very first rehearsal, and indeed be first on the job at every rehearsal. He should cue the music and care for it. He should take infinite pains with soloists, and have monumental patience with the chorus. It is also wise to have an assistant Music Director to train backward numbers, and also understudy the chief, for the conductor's chair *must* be filled, and every precaution taken to insure an experienced musician occupying it, particularly in case of sickness on the night of the performance.

Where drills or marches are employed, the Music Director should cue them so that the chorus invariably begins each figure on the same word every time.

The Music Director must also prepare numbers for intermission and a march for emptying the auditorium at the end of the performance. And he must do it all beforehand, and with much patience and endless practice see that it is done well.

CHAPTER XII

THE STAGE MANAGER

THE Stage Manager should have a copy of the script during rehearsals, and note all stage directions not already set forth therein, and thus settle in definite fashion any subsequent controversies as to whether this or that was or was not done the last time it was rehearsed.

He likewise makes out a list or plot of stage lighting requirements for the electrician, and a full list of music cues for the Music Director, in case the latter doesn't do it himself—which he should.

Unless the production is to be unveiled in a regular theatre, with its own stage staff, it will also be necessary for him to recruit an amateur staff to set the scenery and the stage, as well as raise and lower the curtain. They must also be taught to keep all set pieces, etc., for each act together, and in a certain spot, and rehearsed in the actual handling of the scenery, so that they won't be tripping over it on the night of the performance.

He must assign dressing rooms with the thought in mind that the actors who have the most appearances should have dressing rooms nearest the stage, and he must prepare a list to be tacked on the call board advising the number of the dressing room to be used by each member of the cast. Confusion and

misunderstanding may be wholly eliminated by tacking to each dressing room door a list of the actors who are to occupy it.

He should also prepare and post in each dressing room a schedule of the scenes and a list of the persons appearing therein, so that during the actual performance a Call Boy can circulate among the dressing rooms with the announcement "Swanee River Nights next," etc. This produces the splendid condition of keeping off the stage actors not performing, and as a still further precaution the entire cast should be impressed with the necessity of staying in their dressing rooms until called, and not congesting the exits and getting in the way of either stage hands or performers.

Last but by no means least, he should station a guard at the entrance to the stage from the auditorium, and permit no actor in front and no friend backstage, for nothing stamps "amateur" over a performance quicker than actors in make-up sitting with the audience, or the audience strolling dumbly among the actors.

CHAPTER XIII

CHOOSING THE CAST

THE ideal cast for a minstrel first-part is seventeen men. Eight are singers, forming a double quartette; eight are comedians, and the seventeenth is the Interlocutor. A smaller cast, in fact, cannot hope to turn out an acceptable production, while a much larger one is liable to prove awkward and hard to train as well as to handle.

In the amateur minstrel it is politic to arrange so that every member of the cast be assigned some part, if only a "bit," and care taken to keep from playing up any particular member by fattening his part to a noticeable extent above others in the cast, for the play must be the thing and individual ambition subordinated to that ideal.

End-men should be chosen first because of known ability and second where this reputation is not existent, because of the possession of loud, clear voices. Bass talking voices are found to be most effective, although one high-pitched voice in the lot proves screamingly effective.

The best singing voices, of course, should be given the songs, while the dialogs should be divided among the rest of the comedians. In this respect it will be found, of course, that some of the comedians will also sing a song, as this is inevitable in a cast the size of that recommended.

The double quartette should be composed of one good experienced quartette who are accustomed to singing together and able to produce close harmony of the "barber-shop" variety, while the other four members recruited from the best material available and balanced to form a second quartette to the end that the singing of the tuneful numbers will be rendered with full effectiveness, and proper value given their melodic possibilities.

If possible, competition for the different places will prove the means of selecting the best material, and understudies should be elected at the outset to minimize the possibilities of calamity due to principals dropping out at otherwise embarrassing times.

An iron hand should be brandished by the Director at the first attempt made to insert some incompetent yet egotistical party into the cast either because of influence or pure unadulterated forwardness, which party bobs up every time an amateur performance is contemplated, serenely unconscious of his obvious unfitness, and blandly unmindful of veiled hints that there really isn't a single place that he can be used, except as a cadet in the ticket-selling army. On such a dome the kid glove is helpless and the boxing glove method only partially successful—a verbal piece of lead pipe is the only remedy, and it should be administered forcefully and promptly. Remember that the public is not going to pay make-believe dollars to pass by the ticket-taker, so it is up to you to play fair with them by using no pewter talent, especially when a little dig-

ging will uncover ore that will, with the least purifying, disclose more virgin metal.

For the second part there will be required, in addition to those already mentioned, an amateur jazz-band, such as now abound in every city, and several good clog-dancers. Of course these men should also be utilized as part of the seventeen used in the first part if possible. That is, if one of the members of the jazz-band, for instance, is also a good tenor, he should be the nucleus of the second quartette that is organized, or, if one of the " hoofers " can put over gags successfully, he should be used in the first part by all means. The whole idea should be to utilize your resources to the utmost of their capabilities, but that in the event such capabilities are not adequate, to recruit a sufficient lot of talent to insure a balanced production.

Novelties should also be sought and used whenever discovered. A boy soprano—an experienced song and dance team—an original bit of sleight of hand (although this is poison unless both unusual and very snappy)—in fact, any little bits of variety that can be interpolated in the set action, or add color or liveliness should be signed up and used eagerly.

Everyone connected with the production should " scout " for talent, and bring in as much potential material as possible for the Director to choose from.

CHAPTER XIV

REHEARSALS

The best method of avoiding the possibility of unattended rehearsals is to get the cast to vote, at the first meeting, on the nights that everyone can be present without fail. Naturally this cannot be accomplished unless sacrifices are made by some of the cast, but, just as patently, some sacrifices must be made if the venture is ever to get under way. So, the Director should "sell" the idea to the entire cast, get them to pledge themselves to being present, and that promptly, at each rehearsal, and full attendance will result.

Rehearsals should be held often enough to prevent those with poor memories from forgetting what has been learned before. Three rehearsals a week for two weeks, and nightly for the last week, if vigorously worked, will be enough to stage a smart amateur minstrel performance, provided all arrangements as to songs, artists and actors are mapped out fully prior to the first rehearsal, and the cast chosen has some little experience in public appearance. Otherwise from one to two weeks additional rehearsing will be wise.

At the first rehearsal have all the choruses mimeographed on a sheet or sheets so that each member of the cast may have his individual copy, and devote the entire evening to opening and closing

choruses, and the choral numbers that go with the solos. At the end of the first rehearsal assign songs to the balladists with instructions to have them prepared for the next rehearsal, map out the cast for the second part, give the assignments for the end-men who are to carry the comedy burden in the first part, and give the elect their scripts for study.

Set a different night for the end-men's rehearsals in order that their gags be fresh at the time of performance, as otherwise they will be prematurely given publicity by well-meaning but thoughtless members of the company.

At the second rehearsal devote one full hour to song rehearsal of the first part and during the rest of the evening introduce the songs that are to be used in the second part, and distribute scripts to selected actors.

At the third rehearsal add a bit of detail as to finish—see that chorus parts have been committed to memory—pep up any tendency to drag and permit soloists to sing their songs both solo and with the chorus.

From then on add a little at each performance to keep the spirits of the cast up by the obvious progress being made, and at the final dress rehearsal allow the end-men to spring their gags for the first time before the other members of the company, and indeed run the whole performance without a hitch and without interruptions for the purpose of coaching.

Give lagging acts or actors extra rehearsals and

keep one or two clever men in reserve understudying those who drop out from pique or who prove incapable of doing their assignments.

At the time the first rehearsal is held, secure addresses and 'phone numbers of every member of the cast and before the second rehearsal mail them postal cards and also call them on the 'phone on the day set so that alibis may be definitely strangled.

If the performance is to be produced in a regular theatre the Stage Manager should ascertain the dimensions of the stage and a place of like size be secured for rehearsals, for if the cast is trained on either an undersized or oversized stage the result will be awkward periods all through the performance while readjustments are being made to make steps fit the action of the script. As many of the essential props and pieces of furniture as possible should be used from the first in order that the actors be trained under conditions approximating those which will be encountered on the final stage.

In rehearsing the acts that make up the second part the cast for each act should be assembled separately and the skit read to them, in order that they thoroughly understand the action. Professionals often never see the entire play, even after acting in it constantly, but they are nevertheless able to create their illusions artistically, while amateurs are confronted by a mental complex that detracts from their effectiveness unless they know what all the shootin's for. All scenes calling for "business" that must synchronize with the dialog should be rehearsed

over and over until the words and action dovetail naturally with an appearance of artlessness.

When all the acts have been worked out satisfactorily the entire play should be rehearsed from beginning to end—opening chorus to final curtain. No interruptions should be made for coaching, but the Director should make memoranda of all faults and go over them in detail after the act is over. The full rehearsal is as valuable to the Director as to the cast for it enables him to see the whole picture from the proper perspective—the auditorium—and permits essential alterations and corrections that do not appear while he also is on the stage. As for the cast, they will be found to do immeasurably better work if permitted to go through their parts without interruptions, for their spirits unconsciously rise with the action and they are less apt to forget their lines if their memories are not constantly tricked by words spoken by the Director which break in on the rhythm of their memorized speeches. Of course, if they stumble in their lines they must be prompted and if they do anything flagrantly wrong or if the Director decides upon a change in the action, the performance should be interrupted, but otherwise it should be made a rule not to attempt to polish or coach individuals while they are striving with all their powers to go through strange, unaccustomed gestures and lose their self-consciousness in the spell of the story.

If the amateur actor shows signs of having ideas of his own, he should be permitted a little extra rope

in his interpretation, but, of course, the Director must carefully restrain any such nature from attempting too much originality, as the whole production might have to be altered to permit it. Let individuals work out their own salvation when they are so disposed, but don't allow any single actor to go too far in this respect, for a corresponding slackness will be noticed on the part of diffident or jealous co-workers who either openly or secretly resent any favoritism.

The constant rehearsing under skillful direction will be found to create a feeling of confidence among the participants, with a resultant smoothness, and the last six or eight rehearsals can be devoted to shading the production more delicately under their appreciative eyes and with the understanding cooperation of the cast. They will begin to catch the contagion of the smooth-working machinery that is being built up, and their infection will still further oil its smooth working proclivities, to the end that the final dress rehearsal will find them keyed up to a fine frenzy of enthusiasm and confidence that forecasts success.

This dress rehearsal must be held on the stage where the actual performance is to be given and conditions must be as nearly those which will be encountered on the night of the performance as possible. Costumes, scenery, lighting, props,—everything. The Stage Manager and his assistants must be in their places and the curtain rung up and down on schedule. The Director should watch the per-

formance from the auditorium and should not stop the action unless something goes decidedly wrong. Under no circumstance should any attempt be made to change the action or introduce new business at this late hour, and beyond assuring himself that the lights, music, and scenery are in order he should silently watch the result of his handiwork and comment upon the effectiveness of the scene only after the curtain drops, at which time he may suggest possibly a little faster tempo,—a little more pep,—but very little else. Incidentally it will be found that amateurs have a tendency to drag both action and songs and that constant reminders are necessary to keep up the requisite speed. Another little detail that should be guarded against is the tendency of the company when the curtain rises on the opening chorus, to become so hypnotized by the sudden glare of the footlights and the sea of faces suddenly disclosed, that they stumble or mumble the first line of their opening song. Drill into them that they must concentrate in putting over the first line of the opening chorus with full value, and everyone be in on the attack.

The dress rehearsal is as much for the benefit of the stage staff as the actors,—in fact, more so, for they must be drilled in setting and striking scenes, working the lights promptly and properly, and organizing the props so that they will be instantly available when needed, and no hunting required at inopportune moments.

Instructions must be issued to all members of

the production as to what time they are to report on the night of the performance so that they may be made up and in costume at least a half hour before the curtain rises. The Property Man must check up on his lists to be sure that everything required is on hand.

Before the curtain is rung up on the opening chorus at the first performance, the Director should assemble the entire cast in the wings and "pep" them up with a short speech of praise, appreciation and final directions. He should thank everybody—flatter everybody—apologize for any temper that he may have exhibited on account of nervous tension during rehearsals and particularly he should call any parties who may have become incensed at each other during rehearsals to "kiss and make up," so that no one goes onto the stage with any hard feelings. This one act will be found to contribute wonderfully to the morale of the troupe, and will send the cast forth full of vigor, pep and good nature with the inevitable result that the audience will have a good time simply watching the cast enjoying themselves so thoroughly.

CHAPTER XV

SCENERY

THE cyclorama, an invention of some unsung genius, has cast the shackles from the imprisoned forms of amateur scenery builders for all time. Nowadays, in place of sets which mildly insult the intelligence of audiences, or at least excite the derision of those present who have the least artistic sense, and leave them unresponsive to any attempted illusion, this one protean curtain cunningly reinforced with suggestive properties intrigues the onlookers to behold in its soft expanse a mirrored reflection of their own individual idea of what such a scene should be, with pleased conceit at their own power of invention, and delighted appreciation of the opportunity that the scene builder has afforded their imagination.

This cyclorama is a draped curtain of neutral tint which extends semi-circularly around the stage from proscenium to proscenium. It has at least three openings (one in the center and one on each side) for entrances. The drapery at these openings is overlapped about three feet so that they appear solid when not in use. The entrances may be looped up permanently during a scene if a backing is placed to cut off the view of the bare stage beyond.

It is then possible with a few practical decorations to " suggest " any scene from an oriental bazaar

to a roadside retreat. A fireplace; a few chairs; a lounge and a good picture suggests an interior of taste. A sign-board with an arrow pointing offstage with a legend such as "Skinquarter, 4 Mi." and a bit of fence, carries on in place of a poorly painted drop curtain; while a few illuminated columns can imply more grandeur in five seconds than the most inspired artist can duplicate with a brush in an equal number of hours.

To make illuminated columns, procure a sufficient quantity of cream-colored cheese-cloth or voile,—cut the length desired, sew the tops and bottoms firmly to hoops or circles of wire of the desired circumference with a wire fastening to the top hoop so that the column may be raised into the flies when not in use on the stage, and also to hold the columns taut when they are in use. Next procure a wooden box for the base of the column. This base may be decorated with gilt paint, flowers, or left plain as desired. Cut a circular hole in this base *smaller* than the hoop or ring in order that a pull on the top wire will stretch the cloth taut, and then set a light or a couple of strong flash-lights inside the base, light pointed upward, and an effect of surprising beauty is achieved. The top of the column may be hidden by the stage borders or be in view of the audience with flowers or a cardboard cap on the top.

A most effective setting for a minstrel first part is to use from four to six of these illuminated columns, placed semi-circularly about two feet in front of the cyclorama, and in front of these arrange the seats

for the soloists and end-men, tacking a strip of cheese-cloth or voile on the backs of the chairs and another piece on the bottoms, leaving the seat bare, which will give the effect of a solid stone or marble seat upon which all the actors are seated. If an orchestra is employed on the stage during the first part they should sit between the columns and the cyclorama, which space should be widened to about six feet. They should be on a dais about two feet from the ground, and the columns should also rest on this dais. Japanese lanterns may then be hung about the set, and a beautiful frame thus provided for the tableau that discloses itself when the curtain is raised.

The borders, wings and entrance backings should all be of the same color as the cyclorama. Borders are simply strips of the material suspended at the top of the stage to conceal the lights; wings are pieces set on each side of the stage, about four feet back of the front or proscenium and are very necessary, for together with their border they form a frame for any picture that the stage setting presents. The backings have already been described.

The second part employs the cyclorama from start to finish, a fact which gives some idea of its value as a time and labor saver. Simply by the addition of certain suggestive props different illusions are happily created. Cottage entrances, trees made of beaver board, benches and a well provide the necessary suggestion for a Southern scene; windows, a mantel, a grandfather's clock, etc., make an interior

wholly adequate, while a colored draw curtain to operate immediately behind the proscenium wings furnishes all the scenery required by monologists or song and dance teams working in One while props are being changed for the act to follow.

CHAPTER XVI

MAKE-UP

BLACKFACE is the easiest make-up in the entire make-up box, and requires little or no experience to do acceptably. While any other character requires a great deal of thought, study and experimental work, the " nigger " make-up is most elemental, simple in application and anyone using the least care can achieve a satisfactory result, with little or no practice.

In large cities, where the professional " dresser " is available, it will be found to be by all odds the most satisfactory solution to engage him to make-up the entire cast, for not only will he be able to do the work in one-fourth the time, but he will also have his own make-up equipment. This will save that expense which otherwise would prove about ninety per cent waste, as only a small portion of the purchase can be used at one performance.

However, where the " pro " dresser is unavailable, the make-up must be applied personally, and the necessary equipment purchased, which should consist of a comb and brush, soap, wash-cloth, safety pins, cotton or rags, several old towels, scissors, large jar of theatrical cold cream, mirror, powder-puff and powder, small camel's-hair brush, rabbit foot brush, spirit gum, alcohol, mascara, crêpe hair

or wool, nose putty, prepared burnt cork, Creola, Indianola, red and white grease paints.

Always use prepared burnt cork, which comes in tin boxes. Take a small quantity in the palm of the left hand, moisten with water and work into a watery-thin paste. Carefully outline the eyes and mouth, and then apply the preparation to the entire face, neck and ears. The lips and outside of the nostrils are touched up with red. Either use gloves on the hands or apply burnt cork to the backs of the hands, leaving the palms almost white.

If the actor has a beard, or mustache, apply mascara before using the burnt cork. For the end-men leave a larger white space for the eyes and mouths. For "Old Black Joe" apply wrinkles to the face after the burnt cork is thoroughly dry and whiten eyebrows with white grease paint; bushy eyebrows or a beard are achieved with crêpe wool, stuck on with spirit gum. If it is desired to appear toothless, or with one or more teeth missing, use black wax which is kneaded until soft and applied over the teeth, or, if the gum is not available use black grease paint, after drying the tooth or teeth thoroughly before applying; glassless spectacles and a half-bald wig complete the old negro make-up.

For the "high-brown"—particularly for the female impersonator—apply Creola or Indianola paste, darkening the eyebrows and lashes and using a black female wig.

Before attempting to apply make-up, it is best to dress partly and spread a towel over the lap. After

the performance rub cold cream plentifully into the pores of the skin and allow it to remain a few minutes and wipe off with rags. Then wash the face with soap and water after all the make-up has been removed.

CHAPTER XVII

STAGE DIRECTIONS

The first essential of the minstrel second part is that there be no waits between the different acts, one of which should follow its predecessor in smooth succession as soon as the applause has died down and the actors have taken their "bows."

For this reason, acts are selected and ordered with a weather eye to their practical possibilities, particularly as regards changing of scenery, which must be done while another act is in progress.

In order to understand how to place acts in this revue-part of the minstrel, familiarity with stage divisions is essential. The stage is divided into three sections, numbered consecutively from One to Three. Number One is the section between the footlights and the proscenium wings; Number Two takes up two-thirds of the stage, while Number Three means full-stage:

FOOTLIGHTS

o o o o o o o o o o o o

NUMBER ONE

NUMBER TWO

NUMBER THREE

Scenes or acts are designated as being "In One," "In Two" or "Full-Stage." Monologs, duologs, nearly all single turns and less pretentious dance acts should require very little if any stage setting for work of this kind must be done in full view of the audience. Shorter dramatic acts or straight comedies are performed in "Two" and musical comedy acts are shown on "Full-Stage."

By selecting acts that can work in the different stage depths it can be readily seen that it will be a simple matter to bill a program with no waits between acts.

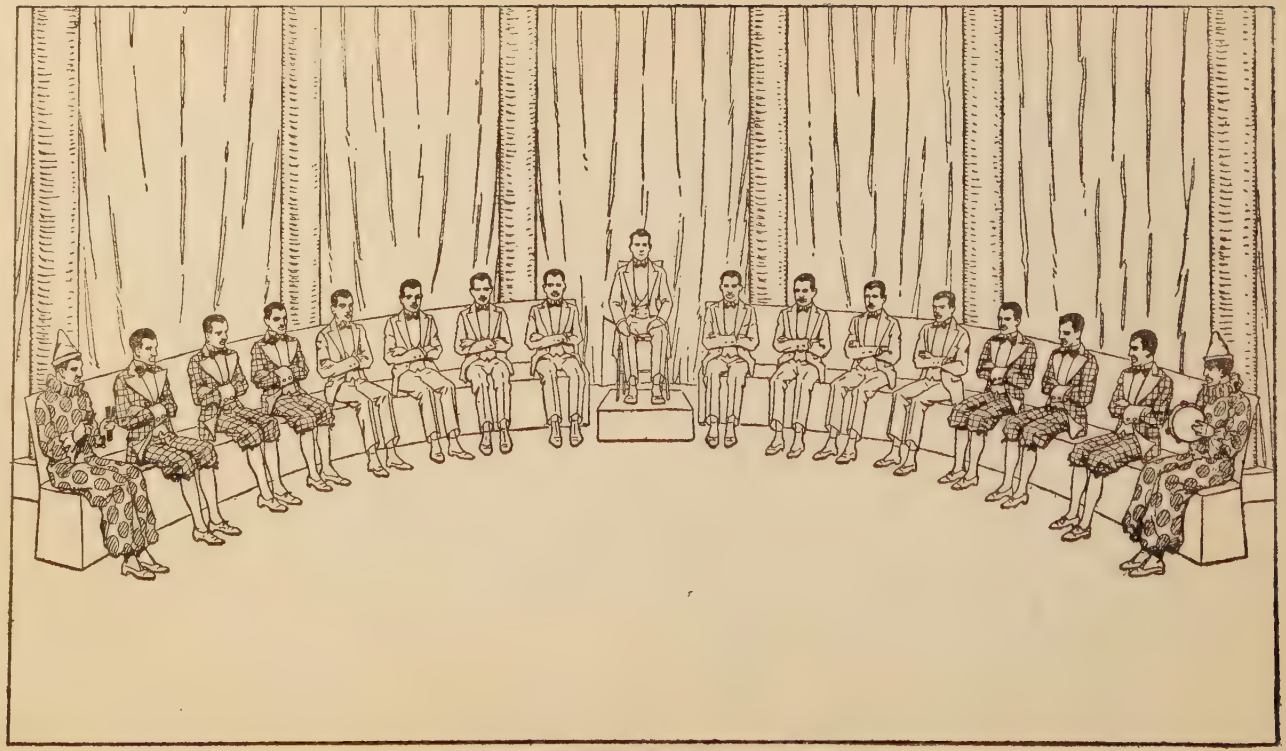
Regarding script jargon, it is necessary to state that "Left" and "Right" means the actor's left or right as he faces the audience. "Enter" means the actor's entrance to the stage and "Exit" his departure therefrom. "Upstage" is the back and "Downstage" the front of the stage.

The most typical faults of amateurs are those of playing too far back on the stage; indistinct and hurried enunciation; over-acting and gesticulating; unnatural movements about the stage; striding rather than walking naturally; failing to look into the eyes of the person addressed; not appearing to listen when addressed; failure to anticipate entrance and exit cues causing "flat" spots in the action; talking while the audience is laughing, or, at a pause, doing it mechanically rather than as though pondering the remark that caused the laugh or considering the next speech to be made; unnatural speech; "hogging" the action; trying to divert the attention

of the audience while a fellow actor is performing; getting behind another actor so that the audience cannot see him; lack of study not only of dialog but of "business" and overlooking possibilities for strengthening his part by adding human bits to his characterization along natural lines indicated by the interpretation of the part itself.

PART II

MINSTREL FIRST PARTS, SKETCHES AND ENTERTAINMENTS



A Conventional Minstrel Setting

I

SUWANEE RIVER MINSTRELS

First Part. Scene laid on the banks of the Suwanee River,—in the circle are seated eight melodists (two complete quartettes) and an equal number of end-men. The latter are not selected because of vocal accomplishments, but for their ability to delineate the Southern Negro.

This first part features seven end-men's dialogs, three ballads, three comic songs and a closing number. In the songs, a rule should be made that no singer attempt more than one verse and chorus, with one chorus for encore, as the success of this first part depends upon the speedy action to keep the audience from becoming restive. For the same reason, it is unwise to "fatten" any of the end-men's parts beyond the script—remember "speed is the essence of success."

The interlocutor should address end-men by their first names—"Harry," "Joe," etc., in his dialogs with them, and by both their given and surnames—"Harry Hunt," "Joe Fisher," etc., in announcing their songs to the audience. End-men should invariably address interlocutor as "Mister" whatever his name may be. Interlocutor should announce ballad singers to audience as Mr. Harry Jones, etc.

Interlocutor should "feed" comedians cues clearly, and should not crowd the action by following on when the audience is laughing at one sally.

At the same time he must keep the action from dragging, and should any of the gags fail to get over, he should sense this failure, and keep the ball rolling without perceptible pause. Extreme caution should be exercised to keep the jokes in the first part from getting noised about. End-men should be rehearsed alone until the last two rehearsals, which will aid in preserving the desired secrecy, and at the same time permit the jokes to lose their humor for the songsters so that they will be able to curb their own sense of humor at the actual performance.

Opening Chorus (*paraphrase of old songs*).

1. Suwanee River (*sung in quick march time*).

Way down upon the Suwanee River,
Where minstrels roam.
Where girls are sweet and men are clever,
Laughter is light as foam.
All the world seems mad and tricky
Everywhere I roam,
Except the folks in dear old Dixie,
That is the minstrels' home.

2. Sweet and Low (*sung by double quartette in close harmony*).

Sweet and low,—sweet and low
Sound songs of minstrelsee.
Laugh—jest! happi-est
Thoughts come from minstrelsee.
Over the glittering footlights go

(*Tenors only.*)
Songs of the tenors—
(*Basses only.*)
—and baritones low,
(*Quartette.*)
Banish all thoughts of care
As a little babe; as a pretty babe sleeps.

3. Long, Long Ago (*entire company*).

Sing me the songs sung by Mother, so dear,
Long, long ago. Long, long ago.
Tell me the jokes that my Dad loved to hear,
Long, long ago—long ago.
Waft to my ears lovely lyrics and tunes,
Shout loud the laughter of light-hearted coons.
Bring back the fairest of Mays and of Junes,
Long, long ago. Long ago.

INTERLOCUTOR. Gentlemen, be seated. (*Entire company sits down.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to first* END-MAN, *on right.*) Well, ———, I understand that you had a big party at your house last night.

END. Yes, my sister was celebrating.

INT. What was the celebration?

END. She was celebrating the tenth anniversary of her *thirtieth* birthday. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I'm afraid your sister is entirely too loquacious.

END. And not only that, but she talks too much. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I have often wondered what in the world makes that girl talk so incessantly.

END. Well, I've just about come to the conclusion that she must have been vaccinated with a phonograph needle. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. It's a wonder that she doesn't get married, isn't it?

END. It's a mystery to me. She sure does try hard enough.

INT. Now, ———, it's very unfair to intimate that your sister does the courting.

END. Well, all I've got to say is that one night I heard her talking to one of her beaux in the garden, and all of a sudden she said, "Oh, George, let's get married."

INT. I'm surprised at her. And what did George say?

END. He said, "Good heavens—who'd have us?" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. But, still, I believe that she would make some man a good wife.

END. I don't know about that—she's too much like a radio.

INT. How in the world can you make such an absurd statement?

END. Well, every time one of the neighbors uses our party-line telephone she *tunes in;* whenever she hears a piece of scandal she *broadcasts* it; if you try to argue with her she's full of *static,* and every time you try to start anywhere by yourself, she's sure to be *standing-by.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. By the way, ———, did your dog die?

END. Did my dog *die?* Why, Mr. ———, *my* dog hasn't been sick.

INT. Why, you are surely mistaken. I saw him in your front yard one afternoon sitting on his haunches, and howling as though he'd just been run over by an automobile.

END (*after a moment's thought*). Aw, I knows what you means now. Dat dog wasn't sick—he was just plumb lazy.

INT. Lazy?

END. Yassuh, dat is de laziest dog in the whole world.

INT. But, ———, why should laziness cause him to howl so mournfully?

END. Why, you see, he was sitting on an *ant hill,* and was too darned lazy to get up. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. He looked as though he had very fine blood in him.

END. Good blood? Why, that dog traced his ancestry straight back to the dog that Old Mother Hubbard put on light diet.

INT. You ought to sell him then, if that's the case.

END. I sold him yesterday. Got six hundred dollars for him.

INT. Do you really mean that you got six hundred dollars for that dog?

END. I don't mean no! no! no!

INT. Then perhaps you will pay me that fifty

dollars that you've been owing me for nearly five years.

END. I'm sorry, Mr. ———, but I haven't got a cent to my name.

INT. What, you mean to say that you sold your dog for six hundred dollars and haven't got a cent to your name?

END. Well, you see, I took my pay in two three hundred dollar cats. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I understand that you bought yourself a nice squirrel overcoat.

END (*grandly*). Oh, just a trifle—a mere nothing.

INT. You are most modest. A squirrel coat is a very expensive affair, and very few people can afford one.

END. Well, you see, I had to have a raincoat of *some* kind.

INT. But surely, my dear fellow, you're not going to use squirrel for a raincoat.

END. Why not?

INT. Why, the rain will ruin the fur.

END. Listen, Mr. ———, I'm surprised that you should be so ignorant. Let me ask you one question.

INT. Fire away.

END. In all—your—life—did—you—ever—see—a—squirrel—carrying an umbrella? (*Pause for laugh.*) Well, suh, I took the day off Saturday, and went on a little fishing trip.

INT. And did you catch much?

END. No, I can't say that I did. In fact, I just

went down to the river to let the fish know that I'd pulled through the winter.

INT. Speaking of fishing reminds me of a controversy going on as to whether or not Noah did any fishing while he was on the ark.

END. Well, one thing is certain, he *couldn't* have done very much.

INT. What makes you think that even if Noah did fish on the ark, that he couldn't have done very much?

END. Because he only had two worms with him.

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C.)

INT. Ladies and gentlemen, ——— ——— will sing. (*Title of the song. Fourth* END-MAN *on left sings one verse and one chorus of selected song, and repeats the chorus with the entire company. For encore, only one chorus with the entire company.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to first* END-MAN *on* L., *who is gazing raptly into space, paying no attention to the* INTERLOCUTOR.) Well, ———, how is everything this evening? (END-MAN'S *thoughts are miles away, for his only response is to heave a most doleful sigh, and to continue to stare vacantly at the audience.*) I say, ———, old boy, how is everything this evening?

(END-MAN *turns with the look of preoccupation still on his face, until he suddenly realizes that he is being addressed.*)

END. Oh, 'scuse me, Mr. ———, was you expostulatin' wid me?

INT. I certainly was, ———, you seem greatly preoccupied.

END. Lordy, Mr. ———, I was worse dan preoccupied—I was entirely predigesticulated.

INT. You acted as though you were in a trance.

END. Well, I should hope I *was* in my pants.

INT. No, no! I mean you appeared to be in a state of coma.

END. Naw suh! I ain't never been in the State of Oklahoma.

INT. I mean you were in a kind of stupor.

END. Now, you jus' look-a huh, don't you call me stupid.

(*Incensed,* END-MAN *rises and starts to take off his coat and fight, but he is restrained by* END-MEN *on each side of him.*)

INT. Great heavens, ———, I never saw you in such a quarrelsome mood. I was simply trying to find out why you didn't answer my first question.

END. Oh, was that all? I thought you was trying to insinuate that I was a stupid boob from the State of Oklahoma dat didn't have sense enough to keep his pants on.

INT. (*loftily*). You misinterpreted my allusions.

END (*finding* INTERLOCUTOR'S *high-sounding phrases infectious*). And, ah, what, ah, what was the observations asseverated in your initial conclusions?

INT. I asked you—how's everything?

END. Oh!—*She's* fine! (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. She must be very dear to you.

END. Not only very dear, but very, *very* expensive.

INT. I hope that you get along without any arguments. You know, I do hate to see people fuss before they are married.

END. Oh, we have our ups and uppers, I suppose. Most of the time we get along very nicely, but last night, I just boiled over and told her exactly what I thought of her.

INT. And what did she say when you told her what you thought of her?

END. She said, "I love you, too." (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Kidding aside, ———, are your intentions with that dear girl serious?

END. Well, honest, Mr. ———, I wish that I had money enough to get married to-morrow.

INT. Ah, that is the spirit. You wish that you could get married to-morrow!

END. I said that I wish I had *enough money* to get married to-morrow.

INT. Well, that means the same thing.

END. Not by a long shot. If I had enough money to get married to-morrow, I'd stay single and buy a Chevrolet roadster. (*Pause for laugh.*) As a matter of fact, Mr. ———, I broke off my engagement with my gal.

INT. Why, I surely am surprised to hear that. I thought you were devoted to her.

END. Well, for a while we got along very nicely,

but things got so bad finally that I had to give her the gate.

INT. What was the cause of your incompatibility?

END. Says which?

INT. I say what caused you to sour on her so completely?

END. Well, to tell you the truth, she simply became impossible—began to fuss about everything—she criticised my clothes—she bawled me out because peas would persist in rolling off my knife and I had to use a spoon—she objected to my friends and got mad when I said that I was sorry that the judge put Joe Johnson in jail ——

INT. (*interrupting*). Speaking of Joe—did the judge put him in jail for life?

END. No,—not for life,—just from now on. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. And what else did your girl do to annoy you?

END. Oh, she wouldn't allow me any freedom—always had me at her beck and call. Got so I couldn't even call my soul my own, and *on top of all that* ——

INT. Yes, yes!

END. She ran off and got married to another nigger, so I just made up my mind *to quit her completely.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. And you did exactly right, ———; but you mustn't sour on the entire gentle sex because one proved untrue.

END. Oh, I'm keeping an open mind on the subject. In fact, I might say that the Widow Wilson is getting some slight consideration at the present moment.

INT. I don't think I know the Widow Wilson. Is she young?

END. She must be—she's only had time to have one husband. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. But I am somewhat surprised that you should be thinking seriously of a widow,—has she any children?

END. Seven or eight of them.

INT. Well, if it were my case, I'd never marry a widow with seven or eight children.

END. But, you see, she also has a house and lot, a nice bank account, and several other such incumbrances, and when I go hunting a wife, I look for the same things that I look for when buying a new automobile.

INT. And what virtues does a new automobile possess that would be desirable in a wife?

END. I want her to come *fully equipped.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C.)

INT. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. ——— ——— will sing for us that justly popular song (*Title of song. Balladist, second tenor, sings good catchy popular song, with good close harmony chorus. He sings one verse and is joined in the chorus with the quartette. For encore soloist and quartette sing*

one chorus only. INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to fourth* END-MAN *on right.)* Look here, ———, your wife is getting mighty careless with my washing.

END. An' what might be de specific allegations of de indictment?

INT. Simply this,—last week I sent in one of my fine linen shirts and instead of returning it, she sent a dozen very old, worn-out handkerchiefs.

END. Lord bless you, Mr. ———, dem wasn't no handkerchiefs; dem was your shirt. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I should think that your wife would get one of these electric washing machines to help her out with her work.

END. She tried one of them once, but it wasn't practical.

INT. What was its defect?

END. It couldn't tell her any of the neighborhood scandal each week. (*Pause for laugh.*) I declare, dis las' two weeks done near worked me to death.

INT. You do look rather fatigued. What have you been doing?

END. Well, you know, my wife is right fat.

INT. Yes, I have noticed an excess of adipose tissue.

END (*shocked*). You *did?*

INT. Why, yes, of course,—everybody has. (INTERLOCUTOR *turns to circle.*) Haven't all you boys noticed his wife's extreme obesity?

(*Cries of "Yes, yes," "I have," "Me, too," "Yes," "Yes," from members of circle.*)

END (*sadly*). Well, I tried to argue wid her about dem short skirts and rolled stockings, but she *would* wear 'em. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You misunderstood us. We only meant that she *is* getting fleshy.

END. Well, I wish you'd stop imitating a crossword puzzle while you're talking to me.

INT. Very well, ———, but tell me, what has your wife's weight got to do with your being so tired?

END. Well, you see, she decided to do a lot of walking to reduce, and in order to keep the neighbors from seeing her, she did all her walking after dark.

INT. Very sensible idea for as sensitive a woman as your wife is—you shouldn't object to that.

END. It wasn't that. You see, *she made me go along, to scare off kidnappers.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Did her exercise have the desired effect?

END. Well, in the last two weeks *I* have lost eight pounds.

INT. (*clucks his tongue sympathetically*). Tch! tch! tch!

END. And *she* has gained eighteen ounces. (*Pause for laugh.*) Did you hear about the burglar breaking into our house?

INT. Why, no,—what did he get?

END. Nothing but the practice. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Did they come right into the room where you and your wife were sleeping?

END. They came right into the room where me and my wife *made out like we were sleeping,* and I peeped out from under the covers and saw him search the pockets of a pair of trousers on the back of a chair.

INT. What did he find?

END. A couple of hairpins, a lip-stick and a spool of thread.

INT. What in the name of common sense were you doing with those things in your trouser pockets?

END. They weren't mine. He got hold of my wife's knickerbockers. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I should think that the experience would have terrified your good wife.

END. Yes, she got so nervous that I had to take her to the mountains for a week.

INT. Did you drive up?

END. No, we took the train.

INT. Did you enjoy the ride?

END. No, I can't say that we did. The conductor was the rudest person that I ever had any dealings with. Why, do you know, every time he came into our coach he glared at me as though I hadn't paid my fare!

INT. Well, that was rude—and what did you do when he glared at you as though you hadn't paid your fare?

END. *I glared back as though I had.* (*Pause for laugh.*) The train went through a long tunnel

one time, and when we got through my wife said to me, "————, somebody kissed me going through that tunnel."

INT. I can hardly credit a man doing a thing like that.

END. Shucks, that wasn't anything to what some low-down sucker did to *me* going through that same tunnel.

INT. Worse than stealing a kiss from your wife?

END. I'll say so. He stole two chicken sandwiches from me. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C.)

INT. ——— ——— will amuse us for a few moments singing (*Title of song. Second* END-MAN *on right sings verse and chorus of song with a good, lively chorus, assisted by entire company on second chorus. For encore, one chorus only by entire company. If* END-MAN *can do any clog-dance steps, it would add materially to the success of the song to dance it while the* CIRCLE *sings the chorus.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to third* END-MAN *on left.*) Well, ———, how's your wife these days?

END. Not so good, Mr. ———, her head troubles her.

INT. Neuralgia, probably. You ought to buy her some aspirin for it.

END. No, that ain't it;—she's trying to get me to buy her a *new hat* for it. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Speaking of marriage reminds me of reading in this morning's (*Name of local morning news-*

paper.) where a couple got married after a courtship lasting fifty years.

END. Fifty years!

INT. That shows the value of being constant.

END. Rats,—it shows the evil of being persistent.

INT. Why do you say that?

END. She just kept on devilling him until he got so old and feeble he couldn't hold out any longer. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You know, I have been rather disappointed that your sister has never married.

END. Yeh, and so has my sister.

INT. I thought that her sweetheart would have borne her triumphantly to the altar long before now.

END. Well, they actually did go down to the Justice of the Peace's house last Wednesday night, but he refused to marry them.

INT. Weren't they both of age?

END. Oh, yes, they were old enough, but the groom was so drunk he couldn't stand up alone.

INT. Well, why didn't your sister take him home and sober him up?

END. 'Cause when he's sober *he won't go.* (*Pause for laugh.*) By the way, Mr. ———, my wife was up to yo' house yestiddy and she says you all is sho got one cunning baby.

INT. Yes, ———, he is a very pretty child; but I must confess that he cries too much to please me.

END. Lawdy, Mr. ———, it's natural for a baby to cry.

INT. Well, I can't see any reason for it.

END. Shucks, if all your hair was out, and you didn't have a tooth in your head, and your legs was so weak you couldn't stand up, and you had to live on a milk diet, and every dern fool that looked at you jabbered a lot of batty baby-talk at you, I guess *you'd feel like crying too.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I understand that you have joined the militia.

END. Yeh, I had to do it in self-defense.

INT. Why did you have to join the militia in self-defense?

END. My wife took up physical culture, and I had to work up some kind of defense in case a private world war broke out in our house. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You're always trying to make people think your wife is a holy terror; but tell me, have you been away on an encampment with the troop yet?

END. Yes, boy! and I never had so much fun in all my life.

INT. Did you ever have to stand guard duty?

END. Oh, will I ever forget being on guard? I tell you the truth, Mr. ———, things happened so fast the first night I was on guard that I thought I would die.

INT. Did anything exciting occur?

END. I should whisper. You see, my patrol was on the main entrance to the camp, and about ten-thirty I heard someone trying to slip past me in the dark.

INT. How thrilling. And did you shoot at him?

END. No, but I slung him a nasty challenge. I yelled: "Halt, who goes there?"

INT. What reply did he make?

END. He yelled back, "Friend with—bottle."

INT. Friend with bottle, eh? Did you let him by?

END. I yelled back, "Pass, friend—halt, bottle." (*Pause for laugh.*) Then about eleven o'clock two ladies came up. I didn't know at the time but I found out later that they were General Goode's (*Pronounce this word "Goods."*) wife and daughter.

INT. Evidently Mrs. and Miss Goode were paying the General a surprise visit.

END. Yes, but I didn't even know the General was married when they were trying to brush past me, so I halted 'em and told them that Ladies' Night was out.

INT. I suppose they took it in good nature.

END. Say, if good nature was static, those ladies were a clear, cold night. The old gal bawled me out for fair, but I just held my rifle in the way, and said "nothin' doin'"—still not knowing who they were.

INT. Well, how did it all end up?

END. She flew off the handle, and said, "Young man, I'll have you to understand that this young lady and myself are the Goodes (*Goods*).

INT. And what did you do when you found out that they were the Goodes (*The Goods.*)?

END. I said, "Lady, you may be the goods; but you couldn't come through this camp if you were the Cat's Pajamas. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Did you have any other excitement?

END. No,—no more excitement, but along about midnight I slipped into the cook's tent and got hold of a whole blueberry pie, and I want to tell you that there are two kinds of pie that I love, and blueberry is both of them.

INT. Did you eat the whole pie?

END. Well, about the time I had eaten about three-quarters of it, along comes another visitor.

INT. You surely did have a lot of company.

END. Yes, and I was getting sick of so much red tape, so I just kept my seat on the ground and a big boy came strolling up.

INT. What did he say?

END. He said, "Hello, there,—what are you doing sitting on the ground?" and I said, "Oh, just taking life easy and eatin' blueberry pie."

INT. What happened?

END. He said, "And what are you supposed to be around here, anyhow?" and I said, "Shucks, boy, I'm de sentinel,—what are you doing around here?"

INT. I guess that held him for a while. What comeback did he have when you told him who you were and asked who he was?

END. He said, "Shucks, boy, *I'm* de general."

INT. Good heavens,—the General caught you neglecting your duty. What did you do then?

END. I jumped up and said, "Lord, boy, I didn't know that—just hold the rest of this blueberry pie a minute and I'll give you a salute." (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C.)

INT. I know you'll be glad to have Mr. ——— ——— sing that beautiful song (*Title of song.*) for us. (*Baritone sings ballad,—one verse and chorus. For encore one chorus assisted by the quartette.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks down to third* END-MAN *on right.*) You know, ———, it seems to me that you've not been looking so well lately.

END. Nawsuh, Mr. ———, I been mighty pohly (*Poorly*).

INT. What seems to be the trouble?

END. Well, I was nursing dat sick horse of mine, and next thing I knew I suffered a breakdown.

INT. (*warmly, to* CIRCLE). Gentlemen, is not that touching devotion? ——— here, attended his sick horse so faithfully that his own health broke down under the strain. (MEN *nod heads approvingly, and converse with each other in dumb show admiringly.*) Tell us, ———, did the horse get all right?

END. Nawsuh,—he died.

INT. (*sympathetically*). Tch! tch! tch! Pathetic indeed. Tell me, ———, what treatment did you give the poor animal?

END. Well, the horse doctor gave me about two tablespoonsful of a black powder, and told me to put it on a piece of paper, and blow it down the horse's throat.

INT. Yes, that is the only way that you can give powdered medicine to an animal.

END. Well, dis animal of mine evidently didn't know dat.

INT. Why? What did he do?

END. Well, suh! I put de powder onto de paper —put de paper in his mouth—took a deep breath so I could blow it down his throat—an' dat's how-come de horse died and I suffered a breakdown.

INT. Wait a minute, ———, I don't understand what happened.

END. Well, you see, Mr. ———, just as I took my deep breath,—*the horse coughed.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. That reminds me, ———. I read to-day where a man walked up to a mule and kicked it in the face. The paper said that he was crazy.

END. Dat shows how ignorant dese newspapers are. No man who kicks a mule in de face is crazy.

INT. What makes you think that?

END. Why, de evidence proves dat he was thoroughly sane.

INT. Not at all—the evidence is that he walked up to a poor, unoffending mule and kicked it in the face. Do you say that such a man is sane?

END. I sure do—he'd have been crazy if he'd kicked it in the other end. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. By the way, I hear that your sister got hurt in an accident the other day.

END. Naw, she wasn't hurt in any accident. She was just walking through Farmer Jones' pasture wid a red dress on, and his Jersey bull pitched her over the fence.

INT. And don't you call that an accident?

END. I should say it wasn't an accident—the bull did it on purpose. (*Pause for laugh.*) Funny thing happened at our house yesterday, Mr. ———.

INT. Is that so?

END. Yes—my little sister came running into the room and said, "Oh, Mama,—our ash-man is such a good, religious man."

INT. What had happened to impress the child with the ash-man's piety?

END. Well, she said that he had lifted a big, heavy can of ashes up on the tail-gate of his ash-cart when the horse suddenly walked forward three steps, and the can fell on the ash-man's foot.

INT. Surely that was a situation to test the ash-man's true nature. What did he do?

END. Well, my little sister said that the good man sat down on the curbing—took his foot up into his lap,—and talked to God about that horse. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. By the way, ———, do you own a car?

END. Lord, no, Mr. ———, I just had my suit cleaned.

(*He sniffs his coat sleeve as though* INTERLOCUTOR *must have smelled gasoline.*)

INT. No, I didn't mean that—I just heard that the Red Cross people wanted a man who knows how to drive an ambulance.

END. Why, anybody that can drive any automobile can drive an ambulance. There's only one difference between the two.

INT. And what difference is that?

END. Well, if you run over anybody in an ambulance (*Slight pause for effect.*) you have to *go back and pick him up.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You seem to be well posted on automobiles.

END. I ought to be. I worked in a garage for six months.

INT. What make of car did your employers handle?

END. We sold the Tumblebug Super-Two.

INT. What was the chief talking point of the Tumblebug Super-Two?

END. Why, Mr. ———, in place of a spare tire, all Tumblebug Super-Two's are equipped with a bicycle.

INT. Now, ———, I hope you're not going to spring that old chestnut that you equip each car with a bicycle so that the girl won't have to walk back home?

END. No, sir! I'm not joking,—they actually did equip each car with a bicycle in place of a spare tire.

INT. Well, what in the world did they do that for?

END. So that the owner could park his car in the suburbs, and ride down-town to work. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Why did you stop working for the garage, ———?

END. Oh, just something that the boss said to me one day.

INT. You shouldn't be so thin-skinned, ———. You take offense too easily.

END. Now, Mr. ———, you would quit just as quick as I did if he said the same thing to you that he did to me.

INT. I don't think I would—what did he say?

END. He said, "———, you're fired." (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You must have done something wrong to have him discharge you so abruptly.

END. I didn't do a thing—you see, I was working in the Used Car Department—where they kept all the cars that they traded in, and one day an old farmer came in thinking that maybe we had dismantled some of our used cars and sold the parts.

INT. I understand that there are some concerns who do nothing else.

END. Oh, yes. There are quite a number of dealers in junk automobile parts. Well, this hayseed walked up to me, and asked me if *we* had any junk automobile parts, and the boss heard him and so he fired me.

INT. Surely you must have made some reply. What did you say when the man asked you if you had any junk automobile parts?

END. I told him that we did have some, but *that they were all bolted together.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C.)

INT. ——— ——— will sing (*Title of song*).

(*Second* END-MAN *on left sings selected comic song —one verse—and chorus assisted by the entire company. For encore, one chorus with entire company.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to fourth* END-MAN *on left.*) ———, how did you come out in your civil service examination for mail-carrier?

END. Oh, I failed. I only got a hundred.

INT. You got a hundred and failed? That's impossible.

END. Oh, no, it isn't impossible. You see we had four subjects—reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling.

INT. And you got a hundred on four subjects and still failed?

END. Yep,—that is, I got twenty-five on each. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see how much you do know.

END. Shoot!

INT. Well, do you know why Henry Ford wants Mussel Shoals?

END. Sure, he wants to manufacture nitrates.

INT. Right,—and now, tell me something about nitrates.

END. They're cheaper than day-rates. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Do you know anything about Detroit?

END. I know all about Detroit. Detroit makes more automobiles than any other city in the world.

INT. Ah, but they make other things in Detroit besides automobiles.

END. Yeh, I know. I've ridden in *them,* too. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You're very clever, so I'm going to ask you a question that has been puzzling me for some time.

END. Consider yourself un-puzzled.

INT. Well, how can a black cow give white milk that will make yellow butter?

END. How can a black cow give white milk that makes yellow butter?

INT. That's the question.

END. Why, for the same reason that *blackberries* are *green* when they're *red.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Good. Now, I want you to give me the definition of the word "trickle."

END. Trickle means to run slowly.

INT. And the meaning of the word anecdote.

END. An anecdote is a short funny tale.

INT. Now, can you give me a sentence containing the word trickle, meaning to run slowly, and the word anecdote, meaning a short, funny tale?

END (*after a moment's reflection*). The puppy *trickled* down the street with a tin can tied to his *anecdote.*

(CIRCLE *laughs mildly at this to give the audience time to get it.*)

INT. Now, I'm going to ask you two more questions. First, I want you to name the four seasons for me.

END. You want me to name the four seasons?

INT. If you can.

END. Er—the four seasons are—er—pepper, salt, vinegar and mustard. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I'm afraid you're hopeless—but I'll give you one more chance. What is a dromedary?

END. You want me to tell you what a dromedary is?

INT. If you please.

END. A dromedary is—a *two-masted camel.* (*Pause for laugh.*) Now, Mr. ———, I want to ask *you* a question.

INT. Fire away.

END. A dog was tied to a piece of rope fourteen feet long, and ten feet farther away was a nice juicy steak—now how did the dog manage to get hold of that nice juicy steak?

INT. Ah, you don't catch me on that one. You want me to say, "I'll give it up" and then you'll say, "Yes, and that's what the other dog had to do." (*Slight pause.*)

END. No, you're wrong. The dog actually got the meat.

INT. You said that the dog was tied to a fourteen-foot rope, and that ten feet further away there was a nice juicy steak ——?

END. And the dog actually got the steak and ate it.

INT. Well, how in the world did the dog manage it?

END. The other end of the rope wasn't tied to anything. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Are you interested in radio, ———?

END. I should say I am. I'm a radio expert. Why, I've built a half a dozen different sets myself.

INT. I didn't know that you were so ingenious. Do you do any experimenting?

END. I should say so. Why, only last week I built a portable set so small that it could be carried by a man and operated while he was walking along.

INT. Marvelous.

END. I took a long hike through the woods to test it out.

INT. You don't say; and what did you get?

END. I got poison ivy. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I have a wonderful set myself. Would you believe it, I went home at 12:30 last night, and got South America.

END. That's nothing, I went home at 3:30 last night, and got hell.

INT. What do you mean by that?

END. My wife was waiting up for me and caught me fiddling with the door-knob.

INT. That was embarrassing, wasn't it?

END. Well, it would have been much more so if I hadn't had the presence of mind to tell her that I was trying to tune in Pittsburgh.

(*Gestures with his hand, level with his eye, as though he was turning radio dial. Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I've been having some trouble with my set lately, and you may be able to tell me what the trouble is. Every night about eleven o'clock I hear

a terrible squealing sound, and I can't imagine what in the world the trouble is.

END. Didn't Harry Haynes and his wife move somewhere near you?

INT. Why, yes, right next door.

END. Well, that's the trouble. They used to live next to me, and they have the worst squealing set in town.

INT. What! Has he got one of those squawling single-circuit regenerative sets?

END. Single circuit nothing. His wife has a set of triplets. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I've been thinking of buying me another set of headphones for my set.

END. Well, don't do like I did. I thought I'd save money and bought a pair of second-hand headphones.

INT. Couldn't you get anything with them?

END. Nothing but dandruff. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C.)

INT. Mr. ——— ——— will sing that appealingly beautiful song (*Title of Song*).

(*First tenor sings one verse and chorus, with the quartette singing the chorus in close harmony. For encore one chorus with quartette.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks down to second* END-MAN *on right, who sings the following verse to the tune of "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More."*)

END.

"Oh, the touring car needs gas and oil,
A five-ton truck same kind.
A push-cart don't need either one,
For the motor walks behind."

(*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You have a very unusual voice.

END. Yeh, I was in a singing contest a few nights ago.

INT. How did you come out?

END. Well, there were only two of us singing, and I sang the Bulldog from the Opera Bite-Your-Pantski.

INT. I never heard that one.

END. Oh, all of us grand-opera singers include the famous Bulldog from the opera Bite-Your-Pantski in our repertory.

INT. Oh, you must mean the Prolog from Pagliacci.

END (*loftily*). That is the vulgar English translation, I believe, but we professional operatitioners prefer the Italian pronunciation.

INT. Well, what did the judges think of your execution?

END. They were unanimously in favor of it.

INT. Unanimously in favor of what?

END. Of my execution. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I mean, what happened after you sang your song?

END. They told the other boy that it would just be wasting their time for him to sing at all.

INT. Well, I think that he should have been allowed a hearing, before they awarded the prize to you.

END. Who said they awarded the prize to me? They gave it to him. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I read in the paper that a burglar broke into your house.

END. Yes, and I surely was pleased.

INT. You were glad that a burglar broke into your home?

END. Yeh,—you see, he made his entrance through a window that I hadn't been able to get open since we had the house painted. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. But weren't you frightened?

END. No,—not at all. You see, it happened at three o'clock in the morning, and I hadn't gotten home yet.

INT. Did he get anything?

END. I'll tell the world he got something—they had to take him away in an ambulance.

INT. How did that happen?

END. My wife thought it was me sneaking in. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. That reminds me that I've a little bone to pick with you, myself. Why did you tell me that that bottle of whiskey that you gave me was pre-war stuff? Why, one drink of it would make a mouse spit in a cat's face!

END. Exactly, and that's *why* I call it pre-war stuff.

INT. I don't get the connection.

END. It's always followed by a fight. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. You know, last night when we drove home together from the dance, I got right scared.

END. What scared you, Mr. ———?

INT. Because you were as drunk as a lord, and were driving so recklessly.

END. *I* was driving recklessly?

INT. I never witnessed the equal of your recklessness.

END. Good heavens, I thought *you* were driving. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. I was glad enough when you put me out at my house.

END. You ought to be. I had an accident just after I left you.

INT. How did it happen?

END. Well, when I got to the corner there were two lamp-posts in the way.

INT. (*breathlessly*). Yes! yes!

END. And I steered past the wrong one. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. Booze has caused more deaths than anything else in the world.

END. That's a foolish statement to make. WATER has caused more deaths than liquor ever did.

INT. What a preposterous statement.

END. I can prove it without the least trouble.

INT. Do you mean to sit there and say that you can prove that water has killed more people than booze?

END. I certainly do.

INT. Very well, then, young man,—prove it if you can.

END. Well, how about the flood? (*Pause for laugh.*)

INT. By the way, I'm going to celebrate my wooden wedding next week, and I want you to be sure and come.

END. I'll be there with bells on.

INT. And be sure to bring an appropriate present.

END. I'll bring one that will knock you cold, Mr. ———.

INT. Remember now—it should be made from wood.

END. It will be—I'm gonna give you a quart of synthetic gin.

INT. I said that to be appropriate the present should be made from wood.

END. I got you. Synthetic gin is made from wood alcohol. (*Pause for laugh.*) I had a narrow escape night before last, Mr. ———.

INT. What happened, ———?

END. Well, I was walking along the street when up comes a prohibition officer, and wanted to know what I had in my hip pocket.

INT. Heavens! And what did you do?

END. I told him that it was a bottle of ammonia.

INT. I hope you didn't expect him to believe a thin tale like that?

END. Well, he didn't believe it, anyway.

INT. What did he do?

END. He took the bottle away from me and took a good long drink of it.

INT. And then, I suppose, he took you to jail.

END. No, I took *him* to a hospital.

INT. You took the prohibition officer to the hospital? Why did you do that?

END. Because it *was* ammonia. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C.)

INT. As our closing number for this part of our program, we offer our interpretation of George M. Cohan's ragtime patriotic masterpiece, "You're a Grand Old Flag."[1]

(INTERLOCUTOR *himself sings first verse of "You're a Grand Old Flag" or if he is not a capable vocalist, first tenor should sing the verse. The chorus can easily be made into a very effective closing, at a very small expense, employing a very pretty girl dressed as "Miss Liberty" with a large American flag; small American flags for each member of the* CIRCLE, *including the* END-MEN, *which are hidden behind each man's chair during the performance, and brought out at the effective moment during the chorus, as indicated on the music it-*

[1] This music can be secured from any good music store or the Pioneer Music Publishing Co., 119 Fifth Avenue, New York.

self. For an encore to this number, and likewise as an encore to the curtain, and the entire first part, the curtain should be raised, the entire chorus sing, with some simple drill by the entire company, and at the last line of the chorus, "Keep your eye on the grand old flag," drop an American Flag the entire height of the stage with each member of the chorus pointing his individual flag to it.)

VERSE.

There's a feeling comes a stealing and it sets my brain a reeling,
When I'm list'ning to the music of a military band.
Any tune like Yankee Doodle simply sets me off my noodle,
It's a patriotic something that no one can understand.

ENTIRE CHORUS.

"Way down South in the land of Cotton"

SOLO.

Mel-o-dy un-tir-ing,—ain't that inspiring?

ENTIRE CHORUS.

Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll join the jubilee,

SOLO.

And that's going some, for the Yankees, by gum!

(Entire chorus stands at attention and salutes as MISS LIBERTY *enters,* L., *bearing large American Flag.)*

ENTIRE CHORUS.
Red, White and Blue, I am for you.

SOLO.
"Honest, you're a grand old flag."

(*Entire* CIRCLE *whips out small American Flags fastened to sticks about two and a half feet long, from behind chairs, and hold them at salute.*)

CHORUS.

(*Entire company standing still with flags at salute.*)

"You're a grand old flag, you're a high-flying flag,
And forever in peace may you wave."

(*Balladists only, shoulder their flags like rifles, and march down front;* END-MEN *shoulder flags and march to balladists' old places.*)

"You're the emblem of the land I love,
The home of the free and the brave."

(*Balladists divide evenly, and march to sides of stage, and* END-MEN *march down* C. *to where balladists were standing,* "MISS LIBERTY" *turning her back to the audience and marching back to the* INTERLOCUTOR'S *seat, where she turns again and faces audience.*)

"Ev'ry heart beats true under Red, White and Blue,
Where there's never a boast or a brag."

(*Entire company back-step and form half-circle with* MISS LIBERTY *in* C., *soloist walking over to* R.)

"But should auld acquaintance be forgot?"

(*Entire company incline their flags toward* MISS LIBERTY.)

"Keep your eye on the grand old flag."

CURTAIN

(*For curtain encore, entire company sings chorus over, with simple drill marches, along lines indicated above, and at last line huge American Flag drops at rear of company, and hangs fluttering as in a breeze.*)

FINALE CURTAIN

II

SUWANEE RIVER NIGHTS

A Musical Echo from Dixieland
In One Scene

II

SUWANEE RIVER NIGHTS

CHARACTERS

AUNT JEMIMY JONES, *Mandy's grandmammy.*
OLD BLACK JOE JONES, *Mandy's grandpappy.*
TOPSY, EVA } *the terrible twins, her sisters.*
MANDY JONES, *the belle of the Suwanee.*
ERASMUS FOX, *banker, motion picture magnate, and Mandy's suitor.*
JOHNNY JACKSON, *Mandy's sweetheart.*
NED, FRED, TED, JED } *cotton-pickers and melody makers.*

SCENE.—*The home of* AUNT JEMIMY *and* OLD BLACK JOE, *way down upon the Suwanee.*

(*Scene on full-stage. A log-cabin and garden. Cabin, down* L., *with two old armchairs sitting in front of it,—one for* AUNT JEMIMY, *with old spinning wheel in front of it, and one for* OLD BLACK JOE. *Well, down* R., *with windlass and practical bucket that can be lowered and raised to and from the well. Rude board bench in front of well; fence with gate along rear of stage with border of sunflowers; bed of hollyhocks just beyond well, and pots of old-fashioned flowers along the ground in front of the cabin. The whole scene is one of*

restful peace and quiet, and any touch that might add to such an illusion should be included. The whole scene is flooded with the mellow light of the summer moon, and the songs of the mocking birds lend a final beatitude to the beauty of the night. When the curtain rises the stage is empty, and nothing is heard but the evening songs of the birds, as they call their good-nights to their mates and to the world. When their calls finally die down, FRED, TED, NED *and* JED *are heard returning from the cotton-fields, their melodious voices harmonizing the old care-free song: "The Steamboat's Coming Around the Bend, Good-bye, My Lover, Good-bye." Enter* AUNT JEMIMY *from the cabin. She is an ample old woman, with a big, happy face. Her dress is of stiffly starched calico, with an immaculate apron over the front of it, the straps of which cross themselves over her back and fasten to the waist. Her kinky head, black despite her years, is bound in a bandana turban, and she smokes the stump of a corncob pipe contentedly. She walks with quick, waddly steps, and her whole manner is one of alertness and active interest in life. She walks upstage to the gate, and peers offstage in the direction of the singing quartette, whose song becomes louder and louder, until they enter at the conclusion of its final phrase, laughing and boisterously playful. Each of the four is dressed in blue jean overalls, with large-figured calico shirts, and each wears a rude wide-brimmed straw hat. Cotton-pickers'*

bags are hanging from their shoulders, and each carries a watermelon under his arm.)

FRED. Hello there, Aunt Jemimy.

NED. Watermelon for dessert to-night, Aunty.

TED. Hot in the fields to-day, old lady.

JED. When do we eat?

AUNT JEMIMY. Nemmine dat, now, nemmine! Dat's jus' lak you, Jed, always thinking 'bout somethin' to eat. How much you make pickin' cotton to-day?

JED. Too hot to work so hard, Aunty. We only made two dollars apiece.

TED. A man earns what he makes in the fields this hot weather.

FRED. We ought to move to Texas. They pay over double what folks around here do.

AUNT JEMIMY. Nemmine 'bout de weather and nemmine 'bout Texas. What we got to do is get enough money on de banks of de Suwanee, or else dat frisky ole Erasmus Fox'll foreclose dat ere ole mortgage, and den where'll we be?

NED (*drawing a bucket of water from the well*). Shucks, Aunt Jemimy, dat nigger ain't goin' to push us about dat money so long as Mandy smiles at him an' lets him come around once in a while.

(*He drinks from the bucket and passes it to* FRED, *who takes a few swallows, as do also* TED *and* JED.)

AUNT JEMIMY. Dat's all well an' good as long as he's courtin', but you mark my words, once let him

win her, an' you'll hear a mighty different tune when de money is due.

TED (*looking off* L.). Cheer up, Aunty, here comes Old Black Joe for supper, so go get dem good ole possum and taters on the table, 'cause we wants to get through in time to have a little dance before bedtime.

(*Exit* AUNT JEMIMY *and boys, through cabin door. Enter* OLD BLACK JOE, L. *He is an old polite slave darky; bald head fringed with snowy tufts of hair; kindly old eyes beaming from behind old-fashioned octagon-shaped spectacles. He wears an ill-fitting old Prince Albert coat, white vest and striped trousers. A heavy gold chain is draped from one vest pocket to the other, via a vest buttonhole, and his faltering steps are supported by a heavy walking cane. He walks over to his chair, and sits down in it with many a creak and many a grunt, as old bones complain about being bent. After finally getting settled, he takes his stump of a pipe from his vest pocket, fills it with tobacco, lights it up, puffing it slowly and rocking back and forth in contentment. He gazes dreamily into the distance and the hand holding the pipe drops to his lap, and he sings, in a full rich baritone, the song that tells his life story, his present condition and his hope of future reunion with his friends of his youth—"Old Black Joe."* FRED, TED, NED *and* JED *softly echo each "I'm comin'" and the final phrase "old black Joe" in close harmony. At the conclusion of the song* OLD

BLACK JOE'S *head falls on his chest, and he sleeps peacefully. Enter* TOPSY *and* EVA, R. *They are two laughing, romping, care-free and mischievous imps, whose only thought is play, and whose happiest moments are when playing practical jokes on each other or someone else—preferably the latter. Their heads are a mass of kinky pigtails; their calico dresses stop at their knees; their black cotton stockings are carelessly disarrayed, and they chase each other in an aimless game of tag, lacking a more diverting game. Suddenly* TOPSY *spies the sleeping* OLD BLACK JOE, *and with a warning of silence to* EVA *she tiptoes back of him, and tickles his bald head with a straw or feather. He drowsily brushes off the "fly," which returns to the attack relentlessly, until* MANDY *enters from the cabin, and pulls the tormentor away by the ear.* OLD BLACK JOE *awakens finally to the realization that his spoiled grandchildren have been making sport of him, and he shakes his fist at them in pretended anger.*)

MANDY. Aren't you girls ashamed to torment your poor old granddaddy when he is trying to get a little nap?

TOPSY. Aw, Mandy, we was just a-foolin'.

EVA. Gee, he looked so funny trying to get rid of that straw-fly.

OLD BLACK JOE. Dat's de way wid de young folks, Mandy; ever sense de Bible times de young has made sport of de old.

MANDY. Yes, but I always remembered the story

of the boys who made fun of the old man, and were eaten up by the bears.

(TOPSY *and* EVA *cling together for protection at the thought of such justice.*)

OLD BLACK JOE. Dat's right, Mandy, de wicked will be cast down, and de righteous shall be exalted. I think dat we'd better impose a very severe punishment on dese two gallivatin' young colts, so dat dey will learn dere lesson in due time.

TOPSY. Oh, grandpappy, don't spank us!

EVA. If you'll let us off this time we'll never do it again.

TOPSY. Cross my heart.

(*She crosses it solemnly.*)

EVA. An' I cross my soul.

(*She crosses the sole of her shoe mischievously.*)

OLD BLACK JOE. Yes, an' dat's just about how repentant you is. No, you'll have to pay for your sport. Vengeance is mine, says Old Black Joe, and here is de sentence. You is hereby condemned to sing yo' prettiest song fo' yo' grandpap. (*Relieved,* TOPSY *and* EVA *sit down on the bench in front of the well, with arms entwined, while* MANDY *stands behind* OLD BLACK JOE, *and pats him affectionately.* TOPSY *and* EVA *interpolate a duet with some good close harmony, at the end of which they run over, kiss* OLD BLACK JOE *and* MANDY, *and escape into the cabin before additional penalty can be imposed.* OLD BLACK JOE *resumes his pipe, while* MANDY *walks*

upstage and gazes dreamily into the distance. She is a neat, clean, brown-skinned girl, quiet, modest and even tempered. OLD BLACK JOE *watches her speculatively for a moment, and then calls her to him.*) Come over here a minute, honey, I wants to have a heart to heart talk with you.

(MANDY *crosses over and sits down in front of him.*)

MANDY. Yes, Grandpappy.

OLD BLACK JOE. I was in town dis afternoon and had a talk wid Banker Fox.

MANDY. Yes, Grandpappy.

OLD BLACK JOE. You knows, honey, de mortgage on de old home place is due, an' we ain't been able to raise de money to pay it off.

MANDY. But, surely, he understands that the crops have been a complete failure?

OLD BLACK JOE. So he does, honey, so he does, and he says dat he wants to be as easy on us as possible.

MANDY. I don't trust him, Grandpappy. He looks at me in the strangest manner! Ugh! he makes my flesh crawl.

OLD BLACK JOE. Now dere, chile, you mustn't misunderstand him. Why, he told me dat he worshipped the very ground you walked on.

MANDY (*suddenly realizing where the conversation is leading*). But, Grandpappy, I have already told him that I could never think of him in that way.

OLD BLACK JOE. Well, my child, far be it from

me to attempt to guide your feelings in dis most important matter, and if you feels dat you can never love him, I would never permit you to make a sacrifice just to save dis old place, whar I had hoped to spend my declinin' years amongst de scenes dat I loves so well.

MANDY (*alarmed*). But, Grandpappy, what do you mean?

OLD BLACK JOE. Dere, dere, my child; I didn't mean to let dat slip. Don't you worry about it no mo'; just dismiss it from your mind,—just dismiss it from your mind.

(*He tries to get up, and* MANDY *helps him arise. He kisses her solemnly on the forehead, and she throws her arms about his neck impulsively, and drops her head on his shoulder. He gently disengages her hands and walks feebly into the cabin. Enter* FOX, L. *He is a mulatto with a forceful manner; positive, overbearing and conceited,—traits which are apparent before he even speaks. He is dressed very stylishly in a Prince Albert, spats, silk topper and moleskin gloves.*)

FOX. Ah, Mandy! You are looking unusually beautiful this evening.

MANDY. Good-evening, Mr. Fox. Come in, and I will go get Grandpappy.

(*She starts to go into the cabin, but* FOX *detains her.*)

FOX. Come, come, Mandy. Surely you know the reason for my visit this evening.

MANDY. Why, I suppose that you have business with Grandpappy about the mortgage.

FOX. No, I have already talked to him about the mortgage, and he and I have come to an understanding.

MANDY. Ah, I am so glad that it is settled.

FOX. All but one little detail, which I know you and I will be able to decide favorably in a very few moments. Won't you sit down? (MANDY *sits down on the bench in front of the well, and* FOX *sits beside her.*) Surely, Mandy, you realize why I have been so lenient in permitting the mortgage on this farm to run on and on, regardless of the fact that it is long overdue?

MANDY. I feel that it is because you are a man with a big heart, and appreciate the fact that with the crops so bad it is impossible for us to meet the note.

FOX. True, in a sense. I do realize that the weather has been the cause of your family not being able to make the payment that is due, but, much as a banker dislikes to appear unsympathetic, he has to bear in mind always that he is handling other people's money, and therefore leave all personal feelings out of matters of finance.

MANDY. But in this case you know that we will pay you everything as soon as we are able to make the money on the farm.

FOX. I hope it, yes, but my board of directors does not permit me to let my hopes govern my actions.

MANDY. Then am I to understand that you will turn us out?

FOX. I have been hoping that such a course would be unnecessary.

MANDY. But, if what you say is true, how can it be otherwise?

FOX. Mandy, the credit rating of an old helpless farmer would be improved a hundred per cent. if he were suddenly to become the grandfather-in-law of the president of the bank.

MANDY (*rising*). Oh!

FOX (*rising also*). Surely, you must have known all along that I have wanted you for my own, Mandy.

MANDY. Oh, Mr. Fox, you must not speak to me like this.

FOX. Must not? Ah, Mandy, I cannot speak otherwise. For years I have watched you grow in beauty and grace, and my desire for you has grown with you. For years I have admired and loved you. (MANDY *flinches as from a blow.*) Ah, do not shrink from me so. I cannot believe that you do not also care for me.

MANDY. Surely, Mr. Fox, you do not know how your words cut me.

FOX. No, no, Mandy, don't say that.

MANDY. Ah, but they do. I will admit that I did realize that you were interested in me, but I did not believe that you were so serious in your intentions.

FOX. No one could have been more so, Mandy.

MANDY. How sorry I am that you should waste your affection on one so unworthy.

FOX. Never was more worthy maid the object of man's affections.

MANDY. Do not talk like this, I beg of you, for it makes what I must say so very hard.

FOX. Then, if what you would say is hard, don't say it. Just say the one little word that will give me the privilege of protecting you, and teaching you to love me as I love you.

MANDY. No! no! no! It cannot be! It cannot be!

FOX. You mean?

MANDY. I mean that I am promised to Johnny Jackson.

FOX. That fool! That ne'er-do-well?

MANDY. Stop! I will not permit you to slander him when he is not here to protect himself, and thrash you as he thrashed you when you were both younger.

FOX (*throwing off his mask of hypocrisy*). What! Is that man never to cease coming across my path? Is it possible that Erasmus Fox, banker, moving picture magnate, the biggest man on the Suwanee, is to be thwarted in his most cherished ambition by a lazy, shiftless failure who is always chasing rainbows, and who will never get anywhere as long as he lives, and who has not even been seen or heard of for five years?

MANDY (*with dignity*). If you are so cowardly as to say things before a defenseless woman about

the man she loves, there is nothing for me to do but leave you.

(*She starts to go into the cabin, but the infuriated* Fox *catches her around the waist.*)

Fox. Never! I have sworn that you will be mine. (*He tries to force a caress on her, and though she fights him off with all her might, she is overcome by his superior strength.*) There, that's better. You are wise not to struggle, for nothing can prevent me from helping myself to the kisses that I once begged for.

(*Enter* Johnny Jackson *during the preceding speech. He is a well set up young man, dressed modishly in ultra-stylish clothes. He stops when he sees* Mandy *in* Fox's *arms, but steps forward softly and quickly when he senses the situation.*)

Jackson. Listen to me, big boy. The minute you lay your lips on the skin you'd love to touch, I'm gonna push your mouth so far around to the back of your face that you'll spit on your heels.

(Fox, *surprised, releases* Mandy, *who rushes to* Jackson *with joy.*)

Mandy. Oh, Johnny, you have come to me at last.

Jackson. Lady, I've been coming to you for the past five years and coming fast, but I was so far away dat I couldn't get here sooner.

Fox. I suppose the reason is that you've been in jail somewhere.

JACKSON. Big boy, quit trying to make me take you apart. Preserve your breath, because if I ever starts chasing you, you'll need all your lungs can pump.

(*Enter* OLD BLACK JOE *and* AUNT JEMIMY *from the cabin.*)

OLD BLACK JOE. Why, good-evening, Brudder Fox.

AUNT JEMIMY. Well, for de land sake if dere ain't little Johnny Jackson, come back from de big city. How is you, chile? (*She embraces him happily.*) Doggone, you looks as pretty as one of dem *Ladies' Home Journal* advertisements.

JACKSON. Thank you, Mammy, thank you. How are you, Uncle Joe?

OLD BLACK JOE. Well, if de prodigal ain't returned to the fold at last.

FOX. Prodigal is right, but in order that no fatted calf be killed to celebrate his return, permit me to say that it will be impossible for my bank to renew your note, and that unless we have our money by ten o'clock to-morrow morning, the sheriff will put you out in the street by ten-thirty.

OLD BLACK JOE. Why, Mr. Fox, sholy you will not be so hard on us as to do dat? You gave me to understand dat you would renew de note.

AUNT JEMIMY. Why, dere ain't five hundred dollars in cash in dis part of de county.

FOX. Well, it is not my fault that Mandy chooses to have her family cast into the street rather than

marry the man who could give her everything her heart desires.

MANDY. The only thing my heart desires is Johnny, and I will be happier with him penniless though he be than as the wife of the wealthiest man on the Suwanee.

(*Enter* TOPSY *and* EVA *from the cabin. Business of greetings with* JOHNNY.)

JACKSON. Good for you, honey, but you got part of your speech mixed up. Ain't you done heard dat I has made a fortune in the colored moving picture business?

FOX. Surely you ain't de famous J. J. Jackson?

JACKSON. Exactly, of Jackson's Famous Films.

FOX (*immediately friendly*). Why, Mr. Jackson, it is indeed a pleasure to meet you again.

JACKSON. Go jump into the creek and make the Suwanee muddy. Listen to me, you hunk of brown shoe polish, my company is coming down here to make a new super-picture, Suwanee River Nights, and we had anticipated releasing the film through your string of motion picture houses, but I have just made up my mind that I will build a bigger and better movie palace next door to every theatre of yours in the whole circuit, and put you out of business. Dat ought to show who's de biggest man on the Suwanee.

FOX. Ah, Mr. Jackson, have mercy—have pity.

JACKSON. You want to be grateful dat I ain't already made nigger baloney out of you. You didn't

have no mercy when you thought you had things your own way, so you ain't got no kick when de hand dat you was biting wallops you on de ear.

FOX. But, please ——

JACKSON. Beat it, Mutt! (*Enter* TED, NED, FRED *and* JED). Throw him out, boys, before he annoys me.

(*The quartette give* FOX *what is technically known as the "bum's rush" off the stage.*)

TOPSY. Gosh, you sure do look swell, Mr. Johnny.

EVA. You look like Rudolph Valentino (*Change to current movie hero.*) would look like if he looked like you.

JACKSON. Well, folks, I am happy to return under such pleasant circumstances, and as I am a man of quick decisions, having made my fortune that way, I think it a good idea to celebrate my home coming this evening with a watermelon wedding. So I sent my secretary around to all the neighbors before I came here to tell them to come over, and I have ordered three cartloads of watermelons. Everything will be along in a few minutes.

AUNT JEMIMY. Hallelujah!

OLD BLACK JOE. There'll be a hot time in the old town to-night.

NED (*looking offstage*). Here come de neighbors now.

FRED (*running to him and looking also*). Lordy, what a crowd of folks.

TED. Dere is three things dat will bring a nigger every time.

JED. What's dem, Ted?

TED. Watermelons, weddin's and funerals.

EVA. An' we'se got two of them at once.

TOPSY. We got all three of them at once. Dis surely is ole Erasmus Fox's funeral.

(*Enter neighbors, who scatter around, greetings being exchanged, and congratulations showered on* MANDY *and* JACKSON.)

OLD BLACK JOE. Well, folks, dis is a very suspicious occasion, and I suggests dat we inaugurates de festivities wid an old-fashioned Virginia Reel.

(*Happy shouts of agreement greet this suggestion, partners are quickly formed and the Virginia Reel, or old-style square dance, is executed,* OLD BLACK JOE *calling the figures.* MANDY *and* JACKSON *wait until the dancers have forgotten them, and then, with their arms about each other, softly stroll away.*)

CURTAIN

III

THE RADIO JAZZ-HOUNDS

A Discouraging Discord in One Dose

III

THE RADIO JAZZ-HOUNDS

CHARACTERS

SHARPZAN FLATT, *the pianist.*
CATT GUTZ, *violin virtuososilly.*
IVOR PAYNE, *saxophone sobbist.*
FULLER WYNN, *bass-horn blower.*
KANT B. BEET, *the bigger and better drummer.*
K. ORNETT, *cornettist.*
THE SLIDING FOOL, *a trombone tourist.*
U. K. LAYLEE, *Hawaiian harpist.*

SCENE.—*Broadcasting studio of Station J-A-Z-Z. Scene in Two. The studio is set in the conventional manner used by an orchestra, so that all players will face the audience when performing. There is a pedestal lamp by the piano, and downstage,* C., *sitting on a pedestal, is an orthodox microphone, which lights up from the inside whenever a solo is being rendered.* ORNETT, PAYNE, FOOL, FLATT *and* GUTZ *are discovered when the curtain rises. While* FLATT *and* GUTZ *are carrying on the opening dialog, other occupants of the stage should carry on business of tuning instruments, examining music, etc., etc., but show no signs of listening to the dialog.*

GUTZ. Gimme Key West. (FLATT *plays the final phrase of "My Little Grey Home in the West," sounding the "west" discordantly, while* GUTZ *tunes his violin seriously.*) Now gimme do. (FLATT *hits key.*) Now re. (FLATT *hits next key on scale.*) Now hit mi. (FLATT *hits* GUTZ *on head with baton.*) Huh, cut that out, what do you mean by that?

FLATT. You told me to hit you.

GUTZ. I did not, I said hit mi.

FLATT. Well, didn't I hit you?

GUTZ. Mi! mi! mi!

FLATT. Yes, you! you! you!

GUTZ (*helpless before such stupidity*). All right, now B flat.

FLATT. I can't be any flatter than I am. My whole bank-roll consists of 250 Octagon soap wrapper coupons.

GUTZ. Boy, if cleanliness is next to godliness, you is in purgatory. Now, slip me A natural, in common time.

(FLATT *takes a pair of dice from pocket, and throws them on floor with a snap of his finger.*)

FLATT. I reads five, deuce. Dat's *a* natural, *any* time.

GUTZ. An' if ignorance is bliss, you is de bluebird of happiness. Set de emergency brake on de soft pedal, and follow me quietly whilst I makes Fritz Kreisler cuss de day he took up fiddlin' for a livin'! (GUTZ *walks downstage, and stands be-*

side microphone, which lights up, throwing a baby spot on GUTZ. *All other lights go out, except pedestal lamp beside* FLATT. GUTZ *into microphone.*) Ladies and radio rummies, this is station J-A-Z-Z, broadcasting with very little control from the Stewed Studio. Anyone listening to my fiddlin' dat don't like it will please signify it by short-circuiting dere B batteries. (*A sawmill buzzing is immediately heard, a shot sounds and the light in the microphone goes out.* GUTZ *unabashed.*) I accept the nomination. (GUTZ *plays selected violin solo, accompanied on piano by* FLATT. *No encore is taken when the selection is finished. Light in microphone goes out and stage lights turned on.* GUTZ *conceitedly.*) Hot dawg! I guess dat's bad.

FLATT. I *know* it's bad.

GUTZ. Shucks! You is just old man Envy's little boy Jealous. Honest, now, what would you do if you could play de fiddle like dat?

FLATT. What would I do if I could fiddle like dat?

GUTZ. Answer collect!

FLATT. If I could play like dat, *I'd* take lessons.

GUTZ. Why, boy, if I had a nickel for every compliment I have got playing de fiddle, do you know what I'd do?

FLATT. What would you do if you had a nickel for every compliment you've got on your fiddle playin'?

GUTZ. Says I!

FLATT. You'd lack three cents of having enough

to buy a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post*. (*Pause for laugh.*)

GUTZ. Same old story—a horse and a jackass can't agree and never could.

FLATT (*rising indignantly*). Look here, don't you call *me a horse.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

GUTZ. Why, I draws two hundred dollars a week for playing over the radio, and to think (*Pompously.*) dat I began life a barefoot boy!

FLATT. Well, there is nothing unusual in that. I was born without shoes on either. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(*Enter* U. K. LAYLEE, L.)

LAYLEE (*excitedly*). Doggone, I was just held up by a robber.

GUTZ. What did he get?

LAYLEE. My watch, and my pocketbook and my diamond ring—and everything.

GUTZ. Why, boy, I thought you carried a gun all the time?

LAYLEE. I do, but I had it hid in my hat, and he didn't find it. (*Pause for laugh.*)

FLATT. What are you on the program for tonight?

LAYLEE. I am going to play a little tune on my pyorrhea.

GUTZ. Whadda ya mean, pyorrhea?

LAYLEE (*taking ukulele out of spacious pocket*). Huh it is! Dis is my little pyorrhea.

FLATT. Why, boy, why does you call a ukulele a pyorrhea?

LAYLEE. Because four out of five have one. (*Pause for laugh.*)

GUTZ. I thought you were going to break into song to-night.

LAYLEE. Boy, I don't have to break in. I kin find the key and come in like Caruso.

FLATT. Oh, you are the guy with the falsetto voice.

LAYLEE. Naw, I'm de guy wid de false set o' teeth.

(*Pause for laugh.* LAYLEE *draws his lips tight over his teeth as though his gums are toothless.*)

GUTZ. In dat case you should sing "Darling, I Am Growing Old." (LAYLEE *steps downstage, faces microphone, which lights up, and sings song, accompanying himself on the ukulele, assisted by* GUTZ *and* FLATT *on the violin and piano respectively. No encore is taken, and lights are turned on again at conclusion.* LAYLEE *takes his seat. Enter* K. ORNETT, L. *He walks over to where* GUTZ *is standing.*) Look huh, boy, how long you been playing the cornet?

ORNETT. I studied de cornet when I was a little boy going to school.

GUTZ. Well, I declare! Did you get any good marks at school?

ORNETT. Oh, sure! (*Pause.*) But I can't show 'em. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(ORNETT *sits down in his seat. Enter* PAYNE, L.)

GUTZ. Hot dawg! Here's de boy what gave his gal a serenade with his saxophone last night. Did she come down when you got through?

PAYNE. Naw, she didn't utter a sound.

GUTZ. Well, maybe she wasn't home.

PAYNE. Dat's what I thought, but just as I was getting ready to leave, a big nigger driv up in a Buick and tooted his klaxon under her window.

GUTZ. I suppose that you were satisfied then.

PAYNE. I was satisfied that I was using the wrong kind of a horn, for she was in the car before it could come to a dead stop. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(PAYNE *takes his seat, and* KANT B. BEET *enters,* L.)

BEET. Dat's de way wid wimmin! You can't trust 'em, and you can't get 'em on credit.

GUTZ. Why do you talk that way? I thought you were just about married.

BEET. Dat's what I thought day before yesterday, but yesterday my gal sorta act like she wanted me to give up my professional work because it would interfere with her housekeeping.

GUTZ. I didn't know you were a professional man. What profession do you follow?

BEET. Why, I'm a professional bootlegger, and my gal says she wouldn't be able to put up any preserves if she married me because I wouldn't let her use my fruit jars. (*Pause for laugh.*)

GUTZ. Well, if you get married, you must make up your mind to give and take.

BEET. Dat's just what's worrying me now. She thinks dat means I do the giving and she do de taking.

GUTZ. How are you going to decide the matter?

BEET. Well, I told her dat in case I decided to get married, I would send her dis telegram: (*Takes telegraph blank from pocket, and reads.*) "My Darling Eskimo Pie. Cease firing. I surrender."

GUTZ. And suppose you decide not to take the fatal step?

BEET. In dat event she saves de C. O. D. charges on any telegram.

GUTZ. Do you mean to say that you intend to send the telegram collect?

BEET. Did you ever hear of a man buying the rope they hang him with? (*Pause for laugh.*)

(*Enter* FULLER WYNN, *with his bass horn.*)

GUTZ. Well, Wynn, what do you mean coming so late?

WYNN. I been practicing my solo, and it's very difficult and intricate.

GUTZ. Who ever heard of a solo on the bass horn?

WYNN. And it's also very sad.

GUTZ. You surprise me. A bass horn solo, that is difficult, intricate and also sad.

WYNN. To say nothing of the fact that it also makes one very, very thirsty.

GUTZ. Very intricate; very, very sad and very, very, very thirsty. It must be a very unusual solo.

WYNN. Oh, very, very, very, very.

GUTZ. Well, old boy, we'll just give you the ether, and see how your doleful ditty goes. (WYNN *steps downstage, facing microphone, which lights up. His manner is most intense, and waiting until everything is very quiet, he plays "How Dry I Am, How Dry I Am, Nobody Knows How Dry I Am."* GUTZ *lays his head on* FLATT'S *shoulder and weeps convulsively, while other members of the band go through business of weeping, wailing and drinking from pocket flasks. At the finish of the selection microphone light goes out, and* GUTZ *shakes hands eloquently with* WYNN.) Brother, that pretty little ditty carries me back to ole Virginny when I was a child at my sainted father's knee.

(*His emotion overcomes him and he breaks down again.*)

WYNN. Why, boy, how does my concerto make you think of your sainted father?

GUTZ. Because Father was very well thought of by all the wealthy people in our town, who used to come to our house every night and see my dad.

(*He takes his handkerchief from his pocket, and wipes his eyes.*)

WYNN. What was your Dad, a doctor?

GUTZ. No, Dad never studied medicine.

WYNN. Well, was he a preacher?

GUTZ. No, my dear old Dad never preached in his life.

WYNN. Well, if your Dad wasn't a doctor and

wasn't a preacher, why did all the best people in town come to your house every night to see him?

GUTZ. For the same reason that your solo makes me think of him.

WYNN. Says which?

GUTZ. He was the town's most highly respected bootlegger. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(WYNN *goes to his seat, which is next to* BEET. *The latter still has his telegram in his hand and is fingering it uncertainly.*)

WYNN. What's de matter wid you, boy?

BEET. To be or not to be, dat am what is perplexing my gizzard.

WYNN. To be or not to be what?

BEET. To be a jackass and get married, or not to be a jackass and spend my money myself.

WYNN. Shucks, I can tell you how to settle that little question.

BEET. Boy, if you can tell me the best thing to do you will be my friend for life.

WYNN. Why, it's de simplest thing in the world. All we does is to play de wedding march, and den we scientifically observes yo' reactions to its mystic strains.

BEET. What do you mean, mystic strains?

WYNN. De mystery is dat more organists don't get shot playing 'em. (*Pause for laugh.*)

BEET. Does you mean to say dat if we plays de wedding march you can tell by de way I act as to whether I will be happy though married?

WYNN. Oh, beyond peradventure and without gesticulating.

BEET. Let's go.

(GUTZ *distributes a piece of music to each musician, and under his direction they play Chopin's Funeral March. Business of surprise after the first few bars are played.* BEET *glares at his music with dwindling ferocity, his temper gradually melting into tears, and his sobs become so intense that* GUTZ *stops the band.*)

GUTZ. Doggone, dat's de funniest Wedding March I ever played.

FLATT. If dat's a Wedding March, I'se de Kleagle of de Ku Klux Klan.

PAYNE (*who has been turning his music upside down, and back again*). Why, look huh, boy, we done been playin' dis music upside down.

(*Each musician takes his music, turns it over and studies it carefully.*)

GUTZ. Well, what do you know about dat? We *did* have it upside down sho' enough. Come on, boys, let's play it right side up,—it's even sadder dat way. (*The band plays Mendelsohnn's Wedding March, but after the first few bars* BEET *throws down his drumstick, takes his telegram out of his pocket, tears it up and throws it to the four winds.* GUTZ *stops the band and goes over to* BEET.) Look here, boy, how come you do like you do? How can you tear up your proposal of marriage in de midst

of the melodious strains of Mr. Meddlesome's Wedding March?

(BEET *takes a picture out of his pocket and gives it to* GUTZ.)

BEET. See; dat's her photygraft.

GUTZ (*straightening his tie with one hand*). Ah, some peacherino.

BEET (*taking picture and tearing it up*). Curfew shall not ring to-night.

GUTZ. Boy, explain yourself. Why does you suddenly decide, in the middle of the wedding march, dat you ain't gonna love no mo'?

BEET. Brother, if the weddin' march is the funeral march upside down, *I'm* gonna remain right side up. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(GUTZ *goes back to his place.*)

GUTZ. Well, now, boys, it's time to stop dis foolishment and broadcast a little joy to the customers, so on your toes and let's make static green with envy. (*He walks to microphone, which lights up.*) Station J-A-Z-Z now on the air. Please stand by whilst we makes old man ragtime turn over in his grave. (*Band plays good jazz selection.*)

CURTAIN

IV

SO THIS IS LOVE!

Being the Way of a Man with a Flapper

IV

SO THIS IS LOVE!

HENRY FORD, *this is the one that hasn't a cent.*
NANCY HANKS, *winner of the Drakes Branch, N. C., Bathing Beauty Contest and crowned "Miss Africa."*

SCENE.—*In One. A street.*

(*Enter* HENRY FORD, L. *He walks a few steps, and then stops and looks offstage.*)

HENRY. Nawsuh! Ain't no use in yo' talkin' to me like dat. You can't fool me.

NANCY (*offstage*). Aw, Henry, I ain't tryin' to fool nobody.

HENRY. The trouble wid you is dat you'se got a one-track mind, and *I* knows where de passenger lands what rides on dat track.

NANCY (*offstage*). Aw, Henry, you talks like I was a motor-bus.

HENRY. Some men might get fooled, but not dis baby. I knows what's on yo' mentality, and I knows it means a fate worse dan death.

NANCY (*offstage*). Why, Henry Ford, you talks terrible. I don't mean no harm to nobody. I wouldn't hurt a buzz-saw.

HENRY. You tries to make believe you is inno-

cent of all wrong-doin', but *I* knows you is as guilty as a nigga wid an armful of foreign chickens what don't recognize him.

NANCY (*offstage*). Stop talkin' like dat, Henry! What all dem people gonna think?

HENRY. You make out like you don't mean no harm,—you try to make out like you ain't after my money.

NANCY (*offstage*). Aw, go on, Henry, *you* ain't got no money.

HENRY (*ignoring this thrust as best he can*). You figgers to get me infatuated wid yo' fatal beauty.

NANCY (*offstage*). Aw, Henry!

HENRY. You thinks I won't look any deeper dan your beautiful mossy tresses.

NANCY (*offstage*). Henry, stop yo' flattery! You'll get me all illustrated in a minute.

HENRY. You tries to mislead me wid your wonderful figger.

NANCY (*offstage*). Aw, you inflates me, Henry; you inflates me.

HENRY. You would pull de wool over my eyes, wid yo' stylish clothes and dainty little feet; wid yo' curly teeth and pearly hair.

NANCY (*offstage*). Why, Henry, how *can* you say such things? My hair ain't pearly, and my teeth don't curl.

HENRY. I mean curly hair and pearly teeth. But you can't fool me.

NANCY (*offstage*). I wouldn't fool you, Henry, honey. I ain't tryin' to 'ceive you.

HENRY. You'd get by wid murder an' get off wid a small fine.

NANCY. Henry! Dat's awful talk. What *is* you 'cusin' me of, anyway?

HENRY. I ain't 'cusin'; I'se tellin'! You is tryin' to get me to *marry* you. Ever since you won dat bathin' beauty prize down dere at Drakes Branch, No'th Car'lina and got yo'self crowned Miss Africa you been trying to crown me Mr. Africa.

(*Enter* NANCY, L. *She is dressed in one of those super-modest bathing suits affected by our ancestors about the year 1900, in becoming color combinations. Of course she wears the good old black cotton stockings, which are most assuredly* NOT *rolled, and all the other trimmings which made bathing purely a matter of taking a wash. Her limbs are very knobby and her feet very, very large. Across her chest is a white ribbon sash with the words* MISS AFRICA *painted in large letters.* HENRY *looks at her with suspicion, and she edges up to him coquettishly. Time is given for the laugh that follows her appearance by her business of practicing her girlish arts and* HENRY'S *exaggerated indifference.*)

NANCY. You talk like marriage is a crime.

HENRY. It may not be a crime, but from the looks of the newspapers it starts three-fourths *of* the crimes. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Shucks, Henry, you is such a pessimistooken guy. Marriage is an institution.

HENRY. Marriage is an institution, is it?

NANCY. Course, marriage is an institution.

HENRY. Well, who wants to live in an institution? (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. I can't think why you don't want to marry me, Henry. I just can't think.

HENRY. Well, that's the reason.

NANCY. What is de reason?

HENRY. That you just can't think. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Aw, Henry, I does think, too. I thinks it would be just too grand for us to get all married up.

HENRY. And, not only dat, but dere is one other thing about you dat doesn't appeal to my finer sensibilities.

NANCY. Oh, Henry! Tell me dis instant what 'tis 'bout my organization dat rasps on your delicately attuned technique.

HENRY. You is got one constitutional inconsistency dat gives me moral indisposition, an' anæsthetic mal de mer.

NANCY (*shocked by this unsuspected disclosure*). Oh, Henry Ford, what *is* dis terrible unconstitutional condition dat alienates your affection from yo' affectionator?

HENRY. You is possessed of a Pullman mouth, an' such being the case, as far as I am concerned you is "uncalled for baggage."

NANCY. Dat's absolutely untrue an' I can prove it. Why, I ain't never even rid in a freight-car

gondola in all my life. What does you mean—I gotta Pullman mouth?

HENRY. Dat means dat you ain't got *no* lowers, and very few uppers.

(NANCY *is confused by the brutal unkindness of this truth, and becomes half embarrassed and half hysterical. She grins with her lips studiously closed, but finally laughs embarrassedly, disclosing a mouth which confirms* HENRY'S *description.*)

NANCY. Dat's just like a man. Treat a girl nice when you got her alone, and den make fun of her when you get her in front of a crowd. You seem to forget last night in de park when we sat on dat bench.

HENRY. What about last night when we sat on de bench?

NANCY. Well, when I got home I found dat de bench had just been painted green.

HENRY (*in alarm*). Doggone, I bet my second best Palm-Beach suit is ruined.

NANCY. Ruined nothin'! My clothes was de only clothes dat got any paint on 'em.

HENRY. Is dat so? Well, I guess I was sittin' on dat bench, too.

NANCY. Yes, but you lazy devil, you was sittin' on my lap.

(*Pause for laugh.* HENRY *is disgusted.*)

HENRY. Dat's right! Make fun of me. You forget dat I didn't say nothing about night before

last when you asked me to teach you all about baseball.

NANCY. Shucks, Henry, dere wasn't nothing wrong in teaching me about baseball. What did I do to cause all dis caustic comment?

HENRY. You nearly wore me out demonstrating the squeeze play, dat's what you did. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Aw, Henry! Don't fuss at me like dat. People will think you lost your taste for me. Come on now, honey. Say something soft and sweet to me. Come on, Henry—something soft and sweet.

HENRY (*looks at her for a moment as if trying to think up some appropriate term of endearment*). Aw—custard pie! (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Shucks, you ain't got no poetical nature. My sister's sweetie calls her his peach, an' his huckleberry, an' de apple of his eye. Why can't you think up things like that to call me?

HENRY. Dat's all very well for him. He's in the vegetable business, but I'm in de fish trade.

NANCY. Aw, Henry!

HENRY. How would it sound for me to call you my little croaker, or my little fat lobster? (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Dat reminds me, Henry, I been wantin' to talk to you about dat fishing trip I went on the other day, an' caught one of dem *big* fish—let me see,—what is it you call 'em?

HENRY (*sarcastically*). I suppose it was a whale you caught.

NANCY (*earnestly*). No, it wasn't a whale I caught. I know it wasn't a whale.—It *couldn't* have been a whale 'cause I was using whales for bait. (*Pause for laugh.*)

HENRY. I wouldn't be dumb as you is! You is as dumb as your sister, an' she is so dumb she thinks Mussolini is a town in Italy.

NANCY. Well, I'm not *that* dumb.

HENRY. Oh, you ain't, ain't you?

NANCY. No, I ain't, ain't I. Mussolini ain't a town in Italy at all.—It's the capital of California. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(*Exit* HENRY, *waving his hands because of the hopelessness of it all.* NANCY *interpolates specialty song, or burlesque dance, unless she has some other clever comedy bit that she can do well. If a song or dance,* HENRY *enters near the end and finishes it with her. Otherwise he enters when she is taking her bow. No encore.*)

HENRY. Oh! I just saw a horse with two wooden legs!

NANCY. Good gracious, Henry! Where?

HENRY. On a merry-go-round. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Oh, Henry, you are the smartest man I ever loved. Kiss me, Henry, kiss me.

(NANCY *makes attempt to kiss* HENRY, *but he succeeds in fighting her off.*)

HENRY. Quit dat, woman. Don't embarrass me before all dese people!

NANCY. Doggone, Henry, honey. I just can't keep my hands off you when you look at me so sweet.

HENRY. Oh, shucks!

NANCY. Aw, come on, Henry, kiss me! Kiss the Queen of Drakes Branch, North Carolina.

(NANCY *again attempts to enfold* HENRY *in her ardent embrace, but he again foils her.*)

HENRY. Behave yo'self, woman! I never did see such a change in a gal since you won dat bathin' beauty contest. Being around the wild waves has certainly made a wild woman of you.

NANCY. Don't kid me, Henry—kiss me. Come on, Henry; kiss Mama.

(*Business of trying to get kiss, without success.*)

HENRY. Here, I tell you what let's do. Let's change the subject and talk about something educational. (*He thinks a minute trying to hit on a less passionate subject.*) Let's see—lemme think —— Oh, yes! Do you know, Nancy, dat I read in de *Ladies' Home Journal* dat de natives of New Zealand has a very curious custom?

NANCY (*trying to suppress her natural emotion*). Is dey, Henry? Does dey?—I mean *has* dey?

HENRY (*intent on keeping an impersonal tone in his voice*). Yes, Nancy, de native Maoris, dat's de name of de people who lives in New Zealand,—de

native Maoris don't shake hands when dey meet, like we do.

NANCY. Don't dey, Henry? Well, what in de world does dey do when dey meet?

HENRY. Why, dey has a curious custom amongst demselves. When dey meets—dey *rubs noses.*

NANCY (*suffering a wild relapse*). All right, den, Henry. Let's do dat. (*She throws her arms about* HENRY, *and tries vainly to rub noses with him, à la Maori, and in the scuffle discovers that* HENRY'S *shirt lacks several buttons.* HENRY, *embarrassed, turns his back to the audience and rearranges his linen.*) Oh, Henry! You ain't got a button on your shirt!

HENRY. Hush up! Hush up! Don't talk so loud. S-sh!

NANCY. Dat's what you get for not marrying me. A bachelor never has no buttons on his shirt.

HENRY (*turning around*). Yes, and a married man never has a shirt to have no buttons on. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Why don't you lemme make you some shirts, Henry? I'll make you some nice shirts. I'll buy de goods and put buttons on 'em, an' everything, Henry. How many yards do you have to get for a shirt like dat?

HENRY. I would have got two shirts like dis from one yard last night, but it began to rain an' de lady came out and took de washin' indoors. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. I tell you what I want you to do, Henry.

HENRY. What's dat?

NANCY. I want you to be sure and tell me when your next birthday comes, ' cause I wants to make you a present of six nice ten-dollar silk shirts.

HENRY (*becoming interested*). Does you mean really sho-nuff silk shirts?

NANCY. Yes, boy! Six of the finest silk shirts dat money can buy. Dat's what I thinks of you.

HENRY (*enchanted*). Hot dawg! Six of 'em. Dawg-gone!

NANCY (*taking advantage of his appreciation to sidle close to him*). Now don't forget to let me know when your birthday comes, Henry.

HENRY. Sure, I'll tell you.

NANCY (*fingering his coat lapels coyly*). And,— Henry ——

HENRY. Uh, huh?

NANCY. *My* birthday is *next Monday.*

(HENRY *suddenly realizes that he has been tricked, and throws* NANCY *from him.*)

HENRY. Go way, woman—quit your bothering me. Ain't no use in yo' foolin' 'round me, because all I can do is file yo' application, an' let you know in case anything turns up dat you can do for yourself.

NANCY (*exasperated*). I never did see such a conceited man. I bet dat every time you have a birthday you sends your mother a telegram of congratulation. (*Pause for laugh.*) Well, I gotta go home, and change clothes.

HENRY. Change clothes, is you?

NANCY. Yeh, I don't know whether to put on my crêpe de motometer or get into my fool-yard.

HENRY. Get into yo' fool-yard, 'cause you sho' is bug-house.

NANCY. You know, Henry, I makes it a rule to change my costume every hour.

HENRY. When you buttons yo' coat your trunk is locked. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Henry, before I go, won't you do just one little favor for me?

HENRY. What's dat?

NANCY. Kiss me good-bye!—Won't you, Henry ——

HENRY. Aw, go on an' get somebody else to kiss you.

NANCY (*earnestly*). I swear I never been kissed by any man in my life.

HENRY. Well, dat's enough to make you swear. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. Oh, please kiss me, Henry,—just one teeny, weeny little kiss.

HENRY. Do you really mean dat you ain't never been kissed?

NANCY. Honest, I ain't, Henry. I never been kissed by a man in my life.

HENRY. Well, I ain't got no time to be foolin' wid amateurs. If you expects me to work up any interest in your case, you'll have to go an' get a reputation for yourself. (*Exit* NANCY, R. HENRY *interpolates specialty song, plays ukulele or any*

other bit at which he is particularly good. At conclusion of his number NANCY *enters, having made a quick change into a burlesque vamp costume. She carries an extra long cigarette holder, with a cigarette in it.*) Say, you can't smoke in dis theatre!

NANCY. I ain't smokin' in yo' old theatre.

HENRY. Well, you got a cigarette in yo' mouth.

NANCY. Well, you got your pants on, but you ain't panting. (*Pause for laugh.*)

HENRY. That must be your brother John's cigarette holder. By the way, how is your brother John?

NANCY. Why, Henry, John is right pohly.

HENRY. Tch! tch! tch! Is that so?

NANCY. Yes, John ain't so well.

HENRY. What is the cause of his indisposition?

NANCY. He fell out of an aeroplane, and broke his neck. (*Pause for laugh.*)

HENRY. Them aeroplanes are getting more dangerous every day.

NANCY. Ain't it the truth?

HENRY. Sho' is! I read in the paper the other day where a poor unfortunate man got married in one of them. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. I saw in the paper that your sister and her husband have become separated.

HENRY. Naw, that was just an idle rumor.

NANCY. I heard that it was an idle *boarder.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

HENRY. My sister is a woman of high ideals.

NANCY. You don't tell me.

HENRY. Yes, and she has suffered dearly for her beliefs.

NANCY. You're right there. She believes that she can wear a number six shoe on a number ten foot. (*Pause for laugh.*) By de way, Henry, did your sister take all de medicine dat de doctor gave her for her cold?

HENRY. Well, she's a little behind wid de quinine, but she's three weeks ahead wid de whiskey. (*Pause for laugh.*)

NANCY. How does you manage to get so many prescriptions, anyhow?

HENRY. Shootin' craps, dat's how.

NANCY (*prettily*). Oh, you cruel man! Don't you know you should never shoot craps? Remember, Henry, life is as precious to the little craps as it is to you. (*Pause for laugh.*) Oh, Henry, shut your eyes a minute, I got something for you.

(HENRY *trustingly shuts his eyes, and* NANCY *takes advantage of his blindness to imprint a fervent smack on his defenseless lips.* HENRY *is enraged.*)

HENRY. Look here, gal, didn't I tell you not to do dat?

NANCY. Oh, Henry, I just couldn't help myself.

HENRY. Yes, but you just *did* help yourself.

(*They sing a comedy duet, and exit with dance.*)

CURTAIN

V

THE RADIO HALF-BACK

A Comedy in One Scene

V

THE RADIO HALF-BACK

CHARACTERS

PERCIVAL PERIWINKLE DE PUYSTER, *he loves his science and his Rosy.*

ROSY O. GRADY, *Queen of the Campus, who idolizes the star of the football team.*

BIG BOY BROWN, *an idol with feet of mud.*

GET-A-MOVE-ON-MULLINS, *coach of the team.*

JOHN W. MONEY, *a capitalist.*

SOL. STUDE
BUGS BUMBLE
"SPECS" SMITH } *students, and members of the Eta Bita Pi Fraternity.*

MARY MAYRY, *Sol's jane.*

CUTIE CARTER, *Bugs' frill.*

SALLY STUMBLE, *Specs' moll.*

STUDENTS AND THEIR GIRLS.

SCENE.—*Grounds in front of the Eta Bita Pi Frat House, on the afternoon of the big game. At* L. *is the entrance to the frat house; at the rear a picket fence with gate in center. This fence also extends along the right of the yard, and there is a large gate in this section of the fence, over which is a sign reading "To Football Stadium." There are several small tables, surrounded by chairs, dotted about the yard. The colors of Coontown College are in evidence everywhere—red and yel-*

low bunting being draped about in profusion, while red and yellow pennants with the word "Coontown" rampant are plentifully sprinkled about, and suspended above the fence in the rear is a large banner reading "There'll Be a Hot Time in Coontown To-night."

(*As the curtain rises the three students and their girls are strolling about the yard, some focusing field-glasses in the direction of the stadium; some sitting at tables partaking of refreshments; one inevitable group shooting craps on the porch of the frat house. Everyone carries a cane disporting the college colors, and all wear the college blossom—the sunflower. They are singing the class-song, to the tune of Boola-Boola.*)

CHORUS.

Boola, boola—go to school-a
If you'd rule a gal—just fool-a
When you bluff-a;—do your stuff-a
Then she'll fall for your Boola song.
When the moon shines—on the coon-shines
Where the water—melon's ripe
Where the chickens—raise the dickens
Then old Coontown—rambles on.

STUDE (*sitting at table downstage*). I understand that Big Boy Brown has broken training again.

BUMBLE (*at table on* L.). Yes, but he knows that Coach can't do anything about it. Without Big Boy on the team Coontown College don't stand a show to win the Colored Collegiate Conference title.

SMITH (*at table on* R.). And with Big Boy in the line-up, we don't stand a chance of losing it.

MARY. Oh, I think that Big Boy is just too wonderful!

CUTIE. And so masterful!

SALLY. And such taking ways!

SPECS. I'll say he has taking ways, all right. He sure has taken Percy de Puyster's girl from him without half trying.

STUDE. Poor Percy! If he doesn't have any more luck with his radio shocking machine than he had with Rosy Grady, his mastery of the radio science will be a complete failure.

MARY. What is that old shocking machine that he talks about so much, anyhow?

STUDE. Why, Percy claims that he can protect himself from attack by this machine, which gives a radio shock to anyone who touches him.

CUTIE. Who wants to touch Percy?

BUMBLE. You see, he intends to sell it to big banks to protect bank messengers who have to carry large sums of money from the bank for pay-rolls. If a bandit should try to take the money from a bank employee, he would get a knockout shock as soon as he touches him.

SPECS. Percy says that a big capitalist is coming down to see a test of the machine, and will buy it from him if it really does what Percy claims.

SALLY. Well, it can't be very much good, for if it was, he would have knocked Big Boy Brown out when he tried to take his girl away from him.

(*Enter* PERCY *and* ROSY, *gate* R. PERCY *is a runt of a man, with a most comical manner. Very precise; quick witted; wearing white horn-rimmed spectacles.* ROSY *is a "high-brown" dressed to kill, whose very manner shows that she is queen of all she surveys, and, indeed, there appears to be every reason that she should be, for at her appearance all the students and their girls crowd about her with such idolatrous fervor that* PERCY *is forced to the edge of the group, looking as if he didn't understand how it all happened. His hat is knocked over his eye, his tie untied, and, indeed, the only thing that identifies him with* ROSY *is that he still awkwardly supports her vanity case on his left forefinger. While the crowd pays homage to the queen, he straightens his attire.*)

MARY. Oh, Rosy, Solly has written the most beautiful song about you.

ROSY. Really! How wonderful! You may sing it for me, Solomon. (SOLLY, *the tenor, sings "I Love Sweet Rosy O'Grady and Rosy O'Grady Loves Me."*) That's beautiful indeed, Solly, and I do *like* you immensely.

SOLLY. Aw, Rosy!

MARY (*snapping him out of any threatened infatuation*). And that's *all* that she does, young fellow,—so you tend to your knitting, or I'll wallop you one.

CUTIE (*to* ROSY). Oh, Rosy, what a wonderful dress.

ROSY. Oh, just an inexpensive bit from Paree. My personal dressmaker created it for my exclusive use, of course.

MARY. Gee, Rosy, that hat's a knockout.

ROSY. It is rather good, isn't it? My personal milliner dashed it off for me to wear at the big game.

SALLY. Gosh, Rosy, those shoes must have cost a fortune.

ROSY. Oh, they were not so very expensive, considering. I don't expect they cost over $500 each, not including the diamond buckles, of course.

(SOLLY *gets fed up on this high-hat talk, and walks over to talk with* PERCY.)

SOLLY. Rosy is one swell dresser, isn't she, Perc? Imagine getting your dresses direct from Paris.

PERCY. Paris, North Carolina.

SOLLY. Where did you get that snappy suit *you're* wearing, Percy?

PERCY (*grandly*). Oh, that's just a little inspirational creation by my public costumer, Mr. Woolworth.

SOLLY. And that hat! That's a pip, Percy. Where did you come across that lid?

PERCY (*regarding the monstrosity complacently*). Oh, my deah boy, that hat's a mere nothing. A mere bit. A mere brace-and-bit. Exclusive, though. Why, I got that hat direct from the scarecrow on Mr. Vanderbilt's estate.

SOLLY. And, oh, boy, those shoes!

PERCY (*regarding the yellow horrors affection-*

ately). Quiet little moccasins, eh, what? Wotto! Wotto! They cost me a dollar a foot. Not including the buttons. Got 'em direct from my private footer. (*Name of local cheap shoe-store.*)

SOLLY. A pretty penny, eh?

PERCY. Oh, a very pretty penny. Don't you think the penny is a *very* pretty coin?

ROSY (*dropping her Ritzy air in the face of* PERCY'S *burlesque*). Say, you! Cut the blah, or I'll knock you flat.

PERCY (*relieved*). Ah, the queen is herself again.

ROSY (*walking over to him*). How do you expect to amount to anything if you don't upstage the yokels? That's the way me and Big Boy Brown put it over.

PERCY. Say, Rosy, when I sell my shocking machine I'll have so much money that I'll be able to be polite to everybody.

ROSY. Oh, you and your old radio. Don't you know that the worship of the crowd goes to the hero, and not to the rich man?

PERCY. Maybe, but hero worship never was accepted in payment for gowns from Paris, hats from Manhattan or shoes from the shoe-store.

ROSY. Oh, money, money, money! Vulgar, Percy, vulgar.

PERCY. Yes, so is ham and cabbage, but I notice that's what you ordered for dinner.

ROSY. There is such a thing as living on love.

PERCY. Yes, and there's such a book as "Alice in Wonderland," but it don't go in real life.

(*Enter* MULLINS, *from Frat House.*)

MULLINS. Say, has anybody seen Big Boy Brown?

(*Everyone jumps up in alarm as the portent of this remark sinks in.*)

SOLLY. No, Coach, I haven't seen him since twelve o'clock last night.

MULLINS. Where was he at twelve o'clock last night? In bed?

SOLLY. Not by a long shot. He was pulling off a wild party in the Coontown Cabaret, and he had a cargo of booze aboard that would have knocked a mule musical.

MULLINS (*explosively*). What! Do you mean to tell me that that scalawag has not only broken training, but has fallen off the water-wagon on the night before the big game?

SOLLY. Aw, Coach, Big Boy can whip that bunch of rummies single-handed.

MULLINS. What he can do sober is something else again from what he can't do with a hang-over from a cargo of booze. Not only that, but I have warned him before about breaking training rules. This team is not big enough for two bosses.

BUGS. Well, Coach, it's a cinch that you can't get another star half-back to take his place inside of fifteen minutes, so it's up to us boys who have bet our money on Coontown to get busy and find Big Boy in time for the whistle.

MULLINS. Right you are, boys. Coontown College comes before everything else.

SOLLY (*to* MARY). You girls go into the frat house and make yourselves at home while we fellows scatter and find Big Boy Brown.

MARY. Sure. Make it snappy, you collegiate cowboys, and corral Big Boy in time for the game if you have to have him arrested to do it.

(*Exit girls into Frat House.*)

MULLINS. Each of you fellows go in a different direction, and don't come back without Brown. (*Exit students in different directions.*) How about you, Percy? Aren't you going to help find Big Boy?

PERCY. Sorry, Coach, but I have an appointment right here this very minute and can't leave. The rest of the boys will find him without my help.

ROSY. Besides, Big Boy knows how much depends upon him, and I just know he'll be here before the game starts.

MULLINS. Well, I'm going to the gym to give the team a talk before it takes the field. If he shows up here, tell him I'm waiting for him.

PERCY. I'll break the news to him if I have to break his neck to make him listen.

MULLINS. Don't forget—tell him I'm waiting for him ——

PERCY. You're waiting!

MULLINS. —with a *club.*

(*Exit* MULLINS *through gate leading to Stadium.*)

PERCY. Well, if Big Boy fails to show up in time for the game, you'll have a nice opportunity of seeing what happens when hero-worship backfires.

ROSY. Never! Even if Big Boy didn't show up at all, he would still be as big a hero as before.

PERCY. If he don't show up, you'll see how quick a hero can become a hobo.

ROSY. Never! Once a hero, always a hero.

(ROSY *sings the "My Hero" song from the "Chocolate Soldier," or some other song of a like nature.*)

(*Enter* BIG BOY, *up* L. *He is a large man, dressed in college clothes, sweater and flannel trousers. He walks a bit uncertainly, and from time to time nurses his aching head tenderly. It is very evident that he is just recovering from a spree, but even that does not lower* BIG BOY BROWN *in his own estimation, for his conceit is monumental, and he has sold himself thoroughly on the idea that the college cannot get along without him, and that whatever he says* GOES.)

ROSY (*worshipfully*). Oh, here's my hero now. What did I tell you, Percy?

PERCY (*looking the wreck over*). Didn't the engineer ring the bell, Big Boy? Coach is making preparations to drag the lake for your body.

BIG BOY (*taking the remark seriously*). Aw, what did de big stiff do dat for?

PERCY. Well, several people told him that you had gotten yourself very thoroughly soaked.

BIG BOY. SAY! You runt prune, don't try to

get fresh with me, or I'll wring your neck for you. (*He makes a start as though to carry out his threat, but inasmuch as* PERCY *is not even slightly impressed or alarmed* BIG BOY *uses his energy in nursing a sudden twinge of pain in his aching head.*) Ouch, my head.

ROSY (*alarmed*). Oh, Big Boy, are you sicker?

PERCY. Some calls it sicker—but I calls it likker.

BIG BOY. Never mind the wise cracks, runt. It takes a man to hold his own in the company that I travel in, and don't you forget it.

ROSY. Oh, I know that you can hold up your end in any company, Big Boy.

PERCY. Well, if Coach Mullins sees him in this condition, he'll knock him cock-eyed,—company or no company.

BIG BOY. Aw, rats with Coach Mullins. That bird is getting too smart anyhow. He thinks he's as important around this team as I am; but, believe me, if it wasn't for Big Boy Brown, there wouldn't be any team.

PERCY. If you were twins and hated yourself like you do, you'd be fighting yourself all the time.

ROSY. Big Boy isn't stuck up.

BIG BOY. I should say *not*.

ROSY. He just realizes how important he is.

PERCY. He doesn't underestimate himself at any rate; but just the same, if Mullins gets good and mad he's liable to throw you out of college on that hitching post of a head of yours, so you better hustle into your football togs.

BIG BOY. Is that so? Well, just to show who's boss around here, I'm going to take Rosy out in my twin six for the next hour or so, and you just tell Mullins for me that I won't be able to play on the team again, unless I am elected coach and captain.

PERCY. Well, you're cheer leader for your personal rooting section, that's a cinch!

ROSY. I think you're right, Big Boy, *you* are the one the people pay to see.

PERCY. The people pay to see a football game, and the minute you think that you are bigger than the game the sooner you'll find out that a hero is only a hero as long as he delivers the heroism. A man can't have a reputation and a big head without getting rid of one or the other.

ROSY (*furious*). Oh, you are just jealous because Big Boy is a hero, and you are nothing but a poor boob of an inventor. (*To* BIG BOY.) Come on, Big Boy, let's leave this team and this other Total Loss (PERCY *blinks his eyes at the appellation.*) and we'll ride down the main street and give the yokels a treat.

BIG BOY. Doggone, Rosy, you understand me better than anybody else in the world.

(*Exit* BIG BOY *and* ROSY, *petting each other demonstratively.*)

PERCY. Those were the very words Samson used when Delilah gave him a boyish bob. There ain't a man in the world who's such a big fool that he can't find some woman able and willing to make

him a bigger one, and history proves that when a professional hero turns into an amateur sheik, he loses his professional standing, and gets kicked out on to the sidewalk. And just as sure as Cleopatra flattered Mark Anthony into an early grave, Rosy is grooming Big Boy Brown for a sock on the popularity.

(*Enter* JOHN W. MONEY, *up* L. *He is a splendidly dressed man of the promoter capitalist type; with big ideas and a large, brisk high-pressure manner.*)

MONEY. I am looking for Mr. Percival de Puyster.

PERCY. You have just finished looking.

(*They shake hands.*)

MONEY. Now, Mr. de Puyster, I am a man of action and few words. You claim that you have invented a wireless radio shocking machine that will safeguard bank messengers from assault by bandits.

PERCY. Positively.

MONEY. Well, sir, I will pay to any man who can prove that he has such a device a cold half million.

PERCY. All right, boss, you name the time and I'll deliver the goods.

MONEY. The time? Say, the time is right now. I am a man of action and few words, and I can't waste over fifteen minutes closing a small transaction like this.

PERCY (*in awe*). When you said you would pay a

cold half million, did you mean money or snowballs?

MONEY. Half million dollars, of course. Not a very large amount, to be sure, but this is not a very large transaction.

PERCY. Oh, how can a man be so sacrilegious about money?

MONEY. Bah! A bagatelle! Well, sir, I will give you fifteen minutes to make your test.

PERCY. But listen, boss, how am I gonna get someone to consent to being shocked half to death in the next fifteen minutes?

MONEY. That's your riddle.

(*He goes to table,* L., *sits down, and taking book of papers from pocket begins to figure as though already on something else.*)

PERCY. Speaking of riddles, I've often wondered if a man with a voice like mine could sing a song before a crowd, and not get killed. This looks like a fine chance to find out.

(PERCY *interpolates comical song. One about college life preferable. There will always be one current.*)

(*Enter* STUDE, BUMBLE *and* SMITH *from different entrances. Enter* MULLINS *from stadium.*)

MULLINS. Did you find Big Boy?

SOLLY. When I went to his rooms the landlady said she had not seen him since yesterday morning.

BUGS. I went down to Pete's place, but Pete said

that they had thrown Big Boy out of there at 2 A. M. this morning, and if he never sees him again, it will still be too soon.

SPECS. I went to all the pool rooms, but nobody knew where I could find him.

MULLINS. My Gawd! That bird is worse than a prima-donna. The game starts in two minutes, and with that big hunk of cheese out of the line-up we stand as much chance of winning as a snowball in ——

SOLLY (*interrupting*). By golly, I'll bet he has been kidnapped by supporters of the other team.

BUGS. Say! That's just what has happened. Some gamblers have spirited him off to make a killing on their bets.

MULLINS. I believe you are right at that, for that swell-headed bird couldn't resist the opportunity of strutting his stuff before that big crowd. (*To* PERCY, *who has been gesticulating with* MONEY *during the preceding dialogue.*) De Puyster, you get hold of the Chief of Police and tell him that Big Boy Brown has been kidnapped, and to find him if it is possible, or whether it is possible or not. We'll play the first quarter with two or three substitutes, and try to hold them until Big Boy is found.

PERCY. Oh, you mean Big Boy? Why, he was here a little while ago and went off joy-riding with Rosy Grady.

BUGS. *What!*

SOLLY. Gee, didn't he know that the game was ready to begin?

SPECS. Say, he must have gone crazy.

MULLINS. Do you mean to tell me that Big Boy deliberately left the college flat in a tight place and went off joy-riding with a frill?

PERCY. Sure, and he left a message to tell you that he won't play on the team again unless he is made coach as well as captain.

MULLINS (*yelling*). *What!*

PERCY. Yep! He said that you were beginning to think that your brains were as important as his muscle, and for you to see if you could win a game with what you had, without what he has.

(MULLINS *is so dumfounded that he sits down on a chair while the students gesticulate frantically among themselves.*)

MULLINS. Holy tripe! And the skookum of it is that the dern boob is right. No matter how smart a man is he can't be a hero without the beef to put his brains across.

PERCY (*struck with a brilliant idea*). By gosh, here's a chance. Say, Coach, I'll take Big Boy's place.

MULLINS. Say! I got enough to worry me without your rubbing it in. Can the chatter, runt. Cut the comedy!

PERCY. No. Listen, Coach. I'm in dead earnest. Here's the way things stand. You have got to get a substitute for Big Boy Brown, and you haven't got one that is worth putting a uniform on, have you?

MULLINS. Not worth a darn.

PERCY. Good! Then you can't lose anything by trying my scheme, and there's a good chance of it saving the day for you.

MULLINS. Shoot the works, and shoot it fast.

PERCY. Mr. Money, here, insists on a practical demonstration of my Burglar Proof Shocking Machine, right away, and if a runt like me can carry the ball through the opposing team it will prove my invention one hundred per cent., and also win a ball game for you that is lost as it stands now.

MULLINS. If you were to suggest such a thing ordinarily, I'd knock you loose from your complexion, but all that I have to say now is go to it, and if you don't make good, I hope you get killed.

PERCY. Never fear. Now you send a suit for me to the frat house, and I'll rig up my radio receiving set inside of it, and we'll set up the broadcasting machine in the yard here.

MULLINS. You're on. I'm off.

(*Exit through Stadium gate.*)

PERCY. Solly, you've helped me with this machine before, so I want you to handle the broadcasting for me. Every time one of the other team tackles me, just shoot him full of juice, and watch modern science win a football game. Come on, boys, and help Solly bring the machine out here in the yard.

(*Exit* PERCY, MONEY *and three students into the frat house. The boys return almost immediately*

carrying a big, complicated looking machine, with many dials, levers, etc., on the front of it, and a small antenna on top. It is so arranged that when the largest lever is pulled down, a buzzing noise is heard, and a colored light flares up. The boys put the machine on the table in the center of the yard.)

SOLLY. Now, one of you boys stand where you can see the field all the time, and when Percy gets tackled, give me the signal and I will do the rest.

(BUGS *goes to position beside Stadium gate. Enter* GIRLS *from club-house, and other students and girls flock on the stage to see the big game. The air is filled with the chatter of the crowd, and such remarks as "Big Boy Brown has left the team flat"—"Percy de Puyster is taking Big Boy's place," etc., are heard. A whistle is heard off-stage.*)

BUGS. There goes Percy on the field now.

(*Whistle is heard.*)

SPECS. The kick-off. There, Percy has the ball. He's running down the field with the speed of a wheelbarrow.

MARY. What in the world is that funny looking thing that Percy is wearing over his headguard? It looks like a clothes line.

BUGS. It's a life line. Look out, there goes their left tackle after him. Shoot the juice, Solly.

SOLLY. We'll try 150 volts for a starter.

(SOLLY *manipulates lever; machine lights up and buzzes viciously.*)

CUTIE. Oh, look! Percy has knocked the tackle flat!

BUGS. Good boy, Percy! You are sure the bumblebee's-bumble. Stand by, Solly, two men are after him now. Double the dose.

SOLLY. Here's a little message from Marconi.

(*Business of operating machine.*)

MARY. They have got him down. (*Pause.*) Oh, look, Percy is up again and he's knocked them both out.

BUGS. Watch out, Solly, the whole team is after him now. Lord help him when eight men get hold of him.

MARY. Oh, isn't that a shame? All of them have piled on top of Percy.

BUGS. Shoot the works, Solly. The whole team is jumping on Percy.

(*Frantic business with shocking machine, which buzzes louder than ever, ending in a pistol shot.*)

MARY. Oh, look, one of them is crawling out! (*Pause, then jumping up and down.*) It's *Percy.* It's Percy with the ball.

BUGS. There he goes toward their goal post. The rest of them are still lying on the ground. You must have given them an awful wallop that time, Solly. (*Pause.*) Touch-down! Touch-down! Percy has made a touch-down on the first play.

(*The crowd takes up the shout, and pandemonium reigns for a few seconds. Girls hug each other and the studes with broad-minded impartiality, and cheer after cheer is given. Referee's whistle is heard offstage.*) Gosh, look at that, will you? The other team refuses to play any more. Coontown College wins by default. Hooray!

(*As cheers break out anew,* ROSY *and* BIG BOY *enter,* C.)

BIG BOY. Say, what's all the noise about?

SOLLY (*looking at* BIG BOY *disdainfully*). Why, you quitter, Percy de Puyster took the place you deserted and won the game single-handed.

BUGS. A nice hunk of cheese you are. Always making out you was such a footballer, and here Percy comes along and shows you up for a bum.

MARY. Here they come bringing Percy off the field. Gosh, the people have gone mad.

(*Enter* PERCY *carried on the shoulders of other members of the team. He wears regulation football uniform, except that around his waist is an armor-plate, while he has metal pipes around his arms and legs, and as a crowning feature, a super-heterodyne loop or aerial stuck up above his headguard. The crowd cheers wildly.* MONEY *enters from the Frat House.* PERCY *stops the crowd with a gesture.*)

PERCY. My good friends, it gives me great pleasure to demonstrate to the students of Coontown College that brains are more important in life than

brawn. (*He sees* BIG BOY *and* ROSY.) And it is also a fine lesson to such of you who believe that a hero retains his title when he shows a yellow streak.

(*Students understanding the allusion give* BIG BOY *the razz, and he slinks away,* L. MONEY *comes down front waving check in his hand.*)

MONEY. My friends, it gives me great pleasure on this auspicious occasion to present to our young friend at the moment of his greatest triumph, this check for a half million dollars, as a tribute to brains and not to brute strength.

(*He hands* PERCY *check.*)

ROSY. Oh, Percy, what a fool I've been. I don't suppose you will ever fall for me now.

(ROSY *fingers the shocking machine lever, trying to cover her disappointment, and pulls the lever down. Immediately the students who are supporting* PERCY *drop to the floor unconscious and precipitate* PERCY *into* ROSY'S *arms.*)

PERCY. Oh, well, if you put it that way ——

(*They embrace and the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

VI

WORK, THE CURSE OF A NATION

A Monolog in One

VI

WORK, THE CURSE OF A NATION

SCENE.—*Street or other drop curtain*

(*Enter* COMEDIAN, L. *He walks down* C. *and begins to count the number of people in the audience, his right forefinger doing the pointing, while his lips move as though he is calling the numbers under his breath.*)

COMEDIAN. Ladies, single men and brethren out of luck, I regret to announce that upon checking up the number of tickets taken in at the door, against the number of people now sitting within the sound of my voice,—or should I say silvery voice? But, no matter—I find that there are three more people in the house than there are tickets in the till, and inasmuch as this is a charity affair, given in a most worthy cause, we must insist upon the three guilty parties leaving the theatre at once. (*He pauses and looks over the audience alertly, but in all seriousness, and finally lets his gaze rest on the extreme rear of the orchestra floor.*) Ah! There they are! (*Raising his voice.*) Will you good folks in the last aisle please stand up for one moment and let those three deadheads leave the theatre? (*Pause.*) Thank you! Thank you!

(*If this is done with sufficient earnestness, the confirmed "lookers" in the audience will turn to*

watch the egress of the supposed gate-crashers, and the COMEDIAN *begins to count again.*)

COMEDIAN (*counting*). 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Well, I won five dollars from the stage manager on that. He bet me that I couldn't make ten people turn to rubber. (*Pause.*) Pretty nearly every other man, woman and child in the house twisted their necks out of shape, stretching. (*He imitates a man craning his neck.*) Well, folks, they all take the plunge sooner or later, and Barnum said that they were born faster than Ingersoll could make second hands for his non-skid watches.

But that isn't what I really came out here to talk to you folks about. I have just been bursting to tell you about a colored friend who came up here to work—imagine a man actually travelling in search of punishment! Well, this boy had all his money deposited in the Last African National Bank. All the officers of the bank were colored folks, like himself, and everybody was an officer. The lowest office-holder in the bank was fifteenth vice-president and office boy. When this colored boy hit our thriving village, however, he thought it would be best to transfer his money up here where he could visit it a little easier, so he went to the president of the (*Name of large local bank.*) and opened up an account—giving them a check for $400 on the colored bank down there in Georgia. A few days later the president sent for my friend and told him that his check had been returned by the colored bank with the notation "No funds" written on it, and it took him

quite a long time to convince the white gentleman that there must be a mistake, because he had never withdrawn a cent, and his bank book showed that he really had deposited $400. Then the white gentleman sat down and wrote those niggers a red-hot letter, and told them that if they didn't come across mighty quick he was going to have a bank examiner sent down from Washington to look them over. A few days after that my friend dropped into the bank again, and was told that everything was all right—the seventh vice-president and cashier had sent a certified check for the full amount, with a letter reading something like this: (*He holds his left hand in front of him, palm inward, and reads an imaginary letter, using the forefinger of his right hand to indicate the lines.*) "Dear Suh—When us writes on a check 'No funds'—*us* don't mean dat de gentleman what signed de check ain't got no *money* in de bank—us means dat *us* ain't got no money in de bank."

You know, I've been having the worst luck here lately with my jobs. Seems like I can't get a job that will hold up under me. And it's not because I am unfriendly, either—it's not because I try to make an enemy of a job. No man could treat a job with any more tenderness than I do. *Some* people don't know how to behave on a new job; they won't wait until the poor, defenseless little job can defend itself. No, they must pitch right in and scare the poor thing half to death, just because it's not used to their rough ways.—Now, that's no way to treat a nice new job. Live and let live,—that's

my motto.—How can you expect a job to keep strong and healthy and have plenty to do if you go to work and treat it rough?—And get it all finished up five minutes after you're introduced to it?—It's not right—that's all.—Now, you take *me.* *I* know how to treat a job.—Do I give a poor, unsuspecting job a bum's rush the minute I get it?—I say *no!*—I realize that a job has the same right to existence as a Republican (*If a strong Republican community change to "Democrat."*)—even though I can't figure why;—and I treat it with just the same amount of indifference as we do a Republican's (*Democrat's*) vote!—So far as I'm concerned, *it don't count.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

You know, I have only had one *real* job in all my life.—It was a position, with blue ribbons tied all over it.—Have you ever noticed when your train pulled into a station that a man comes along with a little hammer and taps each of the wheels under every car on the train? You know who I'm talking about, don't you?—Well, this job that I'm telling you about was as his assistant.—Every time a train came rolling into the station, he and I had to go all over that train.—All he had to do was to tap each wheel with his little hammer—and all I had to do,—ladies and gentlemen—was *to help him listen.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

Once I had a job thrust upon me, in a bird store.—But it was like a bowl of boarding-house soup—it didn't stay by me very long.—I dunno just how it happened, but one day the boss left me in charge

of the store while he went out to lunch, and of course while he was away a lady had to come in and begin asking a lot of crazy questions, and of course I had to make a fitting answer.—Crazy question—crazy answer.—She said to me, "Young man, I bought a pair of canary birds from this store yesterday, and I want to know which is the popper bird and which is the mama bird. How can I tell?" (*Pauses and looks wisely at audience.*) Well, you know, I *can* tell a hen from a rooster, but there never was a canary bird in any of the hen-coops that I—ahem—patronized, in a lifetime of collecting.—But the boss had given me positive instructions to take care of things, so I had to tell her something. "Lady," I said, "that is very simple. All you got to do is to put a handful of worms in the bird cage, and the popper bird will eat the popper worms and the mama bird will only eat the mama worms." (*Pause.*) Now, that surely would have satisfied any reasonable person; but no, she had to have somebody else do all her thinking for her, and she bobs right back up with another one. "But, my dear young man, how can I tell the popper worms from the mama worms?" (*Pause while he looks from one side of the house to the other as if asking if there was ever a woman so dumb.*) I said to her: "Lady, really, you know, if you don't know how to tell the popper worms from the mama worms—you'll have to ask somebody in a *worm store*—we don't handle anything but *birds* here." (*Pause for laugh.*)

Last summer I made a very important mistake.—I went to Florida looking for work.—And I never was so disappointed in all my life.—What a deceitful place that Florida is.—Take my advice and don't do like I did, going to Florida looking for work.—Why, I give you my *word,* I hadn't been there ten minutes before I *found* some.—(*He assumes an oratorical manner.*) Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to go on record before the members of this lodge—I found *a* job.—You see, every time they sell a man a lot in Florida, he has to hire a few young men to push the ocean off his property, and in spite of everything I could do, some big bully put me to work superintending a bunch of colored boys sweeping the Gulf of Mexico off of a Northern gentleman's corner building lot.—And the *mud!*—Oh! Of all the mud you ever saw, that Florida mud is the muddiest mud!—Why, I give you my word, a flapper couldn't walk ten feet in it without getting mud all over the bottom of her skirt.—Yes!—*knee deep!* I tell you, it nearly killed me, sitting there in that automobile all day, watching those poor men floundering around in that awful mud.—I just got so upset that I had to turn around and look the other way, altogether. —I never will forget how excitedly one of my—ahem!—staff—came running up to me with the information that one of his fellow landscape artists was stuck in the mud up to his knees, and needed assistance and lots of it.—Really, it made me mad to think that a man could be that lazy.—Can you imagine a man calling for help just because he was

stuck in mud up to his knees?—Isn't that the height of laziness?—Why, he was as bad as I am!—I told my courier that if the crazy nut was only stuck up to his knees, that he could *walk* out. (*Pause.*) But, I had to go help him out, after all.—How was *I* to know he was stuck *wrong end up?* (*Pause for laugh.*)

Just before I went to Florida, I applied for a position in a soap factory, and had a *highly* pleasing interview with the gentleman at the employment window.—A most satisfactory conference, indeed. He had two openings—one making analyses, and the other making soap, and he told me that I could have either one that I wanted. All I had to do was to write down on a card whether I wanted to make analyses or soap. (*Pause.*) All I had to do was to spell it and write it down on the card, and the job was mine. (*Pause.*) Well, finally I got a job in a restaurant.—I *despise* making soap, and I *couldn't spell the other darned word.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

And that restaurant! All the coffee cups had rings around the inside of them showing how high the water came up during the flood.—So many customers ordered fly-specks that we finally had to take them off of the bill-of-fare.—It was a very up-to-date place, though!—Everything cooked by electricity.—I never will forget how mortified I felt after I told a connoisseur who was visiting us that we did all of our cooking by electricity, and he made me take his steak back to the kitchen and have our

electrician *give it another shock!* (*Pause for laugh.*)

But the worst job that I ever had was in (*Name of local department store.*)—Floor walking is easy on the hands, maybe,—but oh, boy! what it does to your feet.—One night I went home with my feet swollen up like a hippopotamus with the mumps.—I called up my doctor and asked him what to do, and he told me to make a mustard bath in a clothes boiler and soak my feet in it.—About five minutes later I had to call him up again, to tell him that *I couldn't get my feet in the tub!* (*Pause.*) And the foolish questions that supposedly intelligent people would ask me.—One full-grown man came up to me one day, and said he wanted a couple of pillow cases.—I asked him what size, and he said that he didn't know, but that he wore a six and seven-eighths hat. (*Pause.*)—A dear young thing from (*Name of small town near by.*) asked me if we had any phonograph needles, and when I told her that we had some phonograph needles that would play 100 records—she said that she would have to go somewhere else, then,—because she didn't *have* 100 records.—But what really made me throw up my job was one day last July a dumb boob came in and commenced raising the mischief about a suit of clothes we sold him with two pairs of pants.—When I asked what was wrong he said it got him so overheated wearing both pairs. (*He sings song and exits,* R.)

CURTAIN

VII

THE MAN-MADE (MAID) MINSTRELS

VII

THE MAN-MADE (MAID) MINSTRELS

The Man-Made (Maid) Minstrels is intended for the use of an equal number of male and female characters, which gives the producer the opportunity of injecting a wider variety into the songs and ensembles, to say nothing of having the female rôles in the olio taken care of by the fair sex, rather than trying to create a female impersonator out of the usual minstrel show material. Again, this idea permits an olio of a revue character with a much more attractive assortment of acts, and therefore more latitude in selecting the acts and assigning the parts.

The first part should consist of an equal number of men and women, and should have four ladies with a sense of humor, preferably with experience as elocutionists, for the "end-men" rôles, and a good female quartette for the circle. In this minstrel it will be found possible to raise the musical standard materially and much thought should be devoted to making this end the feature of the performance. Instead of the orthodox solo idea, duets, trios, ballroom dances, etc., should be employed to create breaks between the comedy dialogs.

Eight male and eight female members will be found to be a minimum number of actors that can turn out an acceptable performance, and if it is found upon putting the piece into rehearsal that the dancers cannot sing real music, the cast should be in-

creased to the point where adequate singing and dancing will be assured.

The scene for the first part can be a lawn-party with Japanese lanterns supplying the color, or an evening at the Country Club. Either of these scenes is easily concocted at little expense and the details are left to the imagination of the scene painter.

The first part can be played either in black and white or (as is preferable) with both male and female actors in burnt cork. Certain of the ladies may object to the cork so strenuously, however, that it will be found necessary to adhere to the black and white idea, although even in this event the female "end-men" *must* don the black-face.

Costumes should be tuxedo for the men, and full evening dress for the ladies. End-men should be dressed in white waiter costumes, and the female "end-men" in some uniform. The interlocutor should address the singers, both male and female, as Mr., Mrs., or Miss So-and-so, and the end-men of either sex by their first names. In announcing songs he should give the full name of soloist.

It should be borne in mind that the interlocutor is the main-spring of the first part and great care should be taken in selecting him. A lawyer with a pleasant speaking voice usually makes a capable and happy occupant of the center of the stage inasmuch as he is familiar with the three essentials of the interlocutor's art; experience before the public, clear enunciation and knowledge of the art of "feeding"

—"leading" it is called in his profession. He is also a good judge of dramatic values and understands fully the necessity of putting his points across. Without doubt the interlocutor makes or breaks the first part, so see to it that he is the type that will insure success.

In this particular first part are programmed seven songs of the ballad type, three comedy songs, two dance numbers (one a burlesque) and eight dialogs by end-men and women. (An ambitious program that will either prove highly successful or toward the end will be over-cast due to restlessness on the part of the audience.) The former will be assured by a snappy execution of all numbers with the shortest of encores, while the latter will inevitably result if encores are not curbed and the action allowed to drag.

To give some idea of the possibilities of the first part, the following is an outline of the variety called for:

1. Opening chorus.
2. Current popular ballroom dance exhibition by two clever dancers.
3. Ballad by second tenor.
4. End-man's dialog.
5. End-woman's solo.
6. Duet, contralto and soprano in popular close-harmony selection.
7. End-woman's dialog.
8. Contralto solo.
9. End-man's dialog.

10. Selection by male quartette.
11. Burlesque of ballroom dance by principal male and female comedians.
12. End-woman's dialog.
13. End-man's song.
14. Bass solo.
15. End-man's dialog.
16. Love song duet by tenor and first soprano.
17. End-woman's dialog.
18. End-man's song.
19. End-man's dialog.
20. Soprano solo.
21. End-woman's dialog.
22. Closing chorus.

The opportunity for a tremendous success is great. Select your cast carefully; select your solos with an eye to variety. Work for speed without giving an impression of breathlessness, and you will have a "wow."

Opening Chorus (*paraphrase of old songs*).

1. Suwanee River (*sung in quick march time*).

Way down upon the Suwanee River,
Where minstrels roam,
Where girls are sweet and men are clever,
Laughter is light as foam.
All the world seems mean and tricky
Everywhere I roam,
Except the folks in dear old Dixie.
That is the minstrels' home.

2. Sweet and Low (*sung by double mixed quartette in close harmony*).

Sweet and low,—sweet and low
Sound songs of minstrel-see,
Laugh, jest! happi-est
Thoughts come from minstrel-see.
Over the glittering footlights go
(*Sopranos only.*)
Songs of sopranos
(*Male voices only.*)
—and male voices low
(*First tenor.*)
Banish all thoughts of care
(*Double quartette.*)
As a little babe, as a pretty babe, sleeps.

3. Long, Long Ago (*entire company*).

Sing me the songs sung by Mother so dear,
Long, long ago. Long, long ago.
Tell me the jokes that my Dad loved to hear,
Long, long ago—long ago.
Waft to my ears lovely lyrics and tunes,
Shout loud the laughter of light-hearted coons.
Bring back the fairest of Mays and of Junes,
Long, long ago—long ago.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ladies and gentlemen, be seated. (*Entire company sits down.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C. *and addresses audience.*) It pleases me greatly to be able to announce as our first offering Mr. ——— and Miss ——— ——— in an original

interpretation of the latest ballroom dance success (*The name of current popular dance. Dancers enter from down* R. *and do a good dance number, finishing up with a curtsey and bow,* C., *and a quick running exit at its conclusion. They may take one or two bows for encore but no more dancing.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C., *and addresses audience.*) And now, Mr. ——— (*Second tenor.*) will entertain us by singing a most delightful song, which is called (*Name of song. Second tenor sings one verse and chorus of selected song. For encore one chorus only, assisted by mixed quartette.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to first* END-MAN *on* R.) Well, ———, what are you doing these days to make the time pass?

END-MAN. Oh, I just wind up my watch every night, and she passes.

INTERLOCUTOR. I mean, what kind of work are you doing now?

END-MAN. Oh! I'm not working any more.

INTERLOCUTOR. Not working at all?

END-MAN. No, I gave it a fair, unbiased trial, but it couldn't hold my interest so I dropped it and took up something else.

INTERLOCUTOR. Indeed, and what are you doing now?

END-MAN. Well, I have looked into the situation from every angle, and have decided to get married.

INTERLOCUTOR. What! Thinking of getting married, and deliberately throwing up your position? Do you expect to live on love?

END-MAN. No, not exactly. I expect to live on my love's father. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I see, and who is the lucky lady?

END-MAN. Well, I gave the applications that I received careful consideration, and decided to give the appointment to Maizie Moore.

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you mean Maizie Moore, the daughter of the rich coal-mine owner?

END-MAN. Oh, I wouldn't call him so rich. You forget that I have an income of one hundred dollars a month myself.

INTERLOCUTOR. An income of one hundred dollars a month? Say, *that's* rich, that is. Why, listen. One hundred dollars a month wouldn't even pay your rent in old man Moore's circle.

END-MAN. Pay my rent? What do you mean, pay my rent? You don't think the old man would charge Maizie and me *rent,* do you? (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Tell me, ———, have you asked her father for her hand?

END-MAN. Oh, yes, I mentioned the matter to him Saturday evening.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did he say yes?

END-MAN. Sure, he snapped me right up. He knows a good thing when he sees one.

INTERLOCUTOR. Somehow I can't take you seriously. Do you mean to sit there and tell me that you asked Maizie Moore's father for her hand, and he said O. K.?

END-MAN. Well—practically that.

INTERLOCUTOR. Oh, *practically,* eh? Now, just what *did* old man Moore say when you told him you wanted to marry Maizie?

END-MAN. He said, "Young man, I'd like to *see* you marry my daughter." (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. You know, marriage is a subject that has always exerted a deep fascination for me. I have read a great many books on the subject.

END-MAN. Yes, a good many books have been written on the subject, but they didn't do any good.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why do you say that?

END-MAN. The poor dern fools go right ahead and get married in spite of everything that they can print. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. One of the things that I read was that it was best to marry a person of opposite characteristics. Do you consider that good advice?

END-MAN. Oh, yes, I have always contended that very thing. In fact I might say that is the reason why I decided to marry Maizie Moore. She is entirely different from me.

INTERLOCUTOR. That is very interesting. Tell me, ———, which of Maizie's characteristics is most unlike your own?

END-MAN. Let me see now. You want to know in what particular she differs from me the most?

INTERLOCUTOR. Precisely.

END-MAN. *She* has money. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. You know, I always expected to see you marry Jean Thomas.

END-MAN. Well, for a while I really gave Jean very serious consideration.

INTERLOCUTOR. That was quite apparent, and what caused you to change your mind?

END-MAN. Well, Jean seemed to think that because I wore spectacles and looked through glasses all the time that I was a *gold-fish.*

INTERLOCUTOR. I'm afraid I don't understand you.

END-MAN. Every time we went down-town together she did a wooden-shoe dance in front of the store windows.

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you mean to say that Jean actually became so undignified as to dance on the street?

END-MAN. Jean is one of the best wooden-shoe dancers in this town.

INTERLOCUTOR. Just what do you mean, wooden-shoe?

END-MAN. Oh, she was always saying " wooden-shoe give me that hat and wooden-shoe buy that dress for me, and wooden-shoe gimme dis and wooden-shoe gimme dat! " (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I see what you mean now.

END-MAN. Yes, and not only that but she was one of those nine by twelve girls.

INTERLOCUTOR. Good heavens—what *is* a nine by twelve girl?

END-MAN. You feed her at nine and by twelve she's hungry again. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I see, I see!

END-MAN. And besides that, she always reminds me of a railroad crossing.

INTERLOCUTOR. That's too deep for me. Why did Jane remind you of a railroad crossing?

END-MAN. She was always saying "Stop!" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose that when you decided to marry Maizie you had a time breaking off with Jane.

END-MAN. Believe me! I tried to be diplomatic about it.

INTERLOCUTOR. Naturally, you didn't want to hurt the poor girl's feelings any more than absolutely necessary.

END-MAN. Naturally not. So one night I said to her, "Darling, our engagement is off,—a fortune teller has just told me that I would marry a blond in a month."

INTERLOCUTOR. And how did she take it?

END-MAN. She said that would be all right—give her a month and she would BE a blond. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. By the way, ———, how old is Maizie?

END-MAN. Oh, I don't think she's over eighteen.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I don't think a girl can really learn to love before twenty.

END-MAN. I don't think so either.

INTERLOCUTOR. You evidently misunderstood me. I said that I don't think that a girl can learn to love a man before twenty.

END-MAN. And you're right, too. With that big an audience, she can't concentrate. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you remember the first kiss you ever got from your sweetheart?

END-MAN. Do I remember? Will I ever *forget?* You wouldn't believe the time and expense that I went to to get that first kiss.

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose that your sweetheart was very shy.

END-MAN. She was awful. I wanted to and she said she couldn't. Finally one night, I never will forget that night, she tried to compromise with me.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, ha! She wanted to compromise, did she?

END-MAN. Yep! She said, "If I give you *one* will you be good?"

INTERLOCUTOR. She wanted to know if you'd be good, eh?

END-MAN. Yes, and after she gave me the one, *she knew I was good.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. And the time you first met her! Do you remember the romantic circumstances?

END-MAN. I'll remember it as long as I live.

INTERLOCUTOR. Sweet memories! They cling like the ivy vine. Tell me about it.

END-MAN. Well, I was riding on the train from New York to Chicago, and there was a very pretty girl sitting across the aisle from me.

INTERLOCUTOR. Maizie!

END-MAN. And she was looking at me very intently.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, ha! You had made a hit right off.

END-MAN. Oh, I was a devil in those days. Well, I soon got up, and sat down beside her, and asked her if we had not met somewhere before.

INTERLOCUTOR. The old gag. What reply did she make?

END-MAN. She said that she wasn't quite sure, but she thought I was the man she had seen hanging around the house on the night the dog was stolen. (*Pause for laugh.*) You know, her old man used to be heavy-weight champion.

INTERLOCUTOR. There's an interesting problem in genealogy. You will be the son-in-law of the ex-champion. What will that make you?

END-MAN. It will make me nervous. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. When is the wedding to take place?

END-MAN. Why, I am leaving for Chicago Wednesday. The wedding is Thursday.

INTERLOCUTOR. In Chicago?

END-MAN. No, here in ———.

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. A minstrel novelty: (*Name of first* END-WOMAN *on* L.) one of our female "end-men" will sing (*Name of song. First* END-WOMAN

on L. *sings verse and chorus of selected comedy song. For encore one chorus assisted by entire company.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C. *and addresses audience.*) And now from the ridiculous to the sublime. A study in close harmony by (*Names of soprano and alto.*) entitled (*Name of song. Soprano and alto sing duet. This should be a song that contains a lot of good harmony, and should be sung very softly. Most effective possibilities are here, and care should be taken to develop them. For encore one chorus only.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to first* END-WOMAN *on* R.) Well, Miss (*or Mrs.*) ———, you look tired.

END-WOMAN. Tired? Say, I'm a complete physical wreck.

INTERLOCUTOR. By George, I'm sorry to hear that. What is the trouble?

END-WOMAN. Well, did you read about that earthquake in California?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, terrible, wasn't it?

END-WOMAN. You don't know the half of it. You don't even know the third of it.

INTERLOCUTOR. Were you in it?

END-WOMAN. Worse than that. My sister and her husband and family were right in the midst of it.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, that's a calamity, sure enough. I suppose that you were worried to death when you heard the news.

END-WOMAN. No, when I heard the news I didn't realize what it really meant.

INTERLOCUTOR. You couldn't visualize it, I suppose.

END-WOMAN. Even now it seems to be a horrible nightmare!

INTERLOCUTOR. How deeply you have been affected. Tell me, what did you do to lend aid to your stricken relative?

END-WOMAN. Well, I knew that with all her other worries she wouldn't be able to take care of her little curly-headed cherub of a boy, so I wired her to send him along to me, and I would take care of him until she got things in shape.

INTERLOCUTOR. Only a woman would have thought of such a practical way of rendering assistance.

END-WOMAN. Well, you know, they say there's no fool like an old female fool. Anyway, he arrived in due time, and I got my first glimpse of him as he got off the train. The conductor, the brakeman, the flagman and even the engineer and fireman rushed up and told me how glad they were to be able to deliver him to me ——

INTERLOCUTOR (*interrupting*). Dear little soul ——

END-WOMAN (*continuing*). —before he ruined the whole darned railroad for them. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. A little playful, probably. Boys will be boys.

END-WOMAN. Yes, and tornadoes will be tornadoes. Say, that kid was as red-headed as a carrot,

and he wasn't in the house five minutes before I began to understand why the train-crew pulled out of the station before I had a chance to change my mind and make them keep him.

INTERLOCUTOR. Full of animal spirits, I presume.

END-WOMAN. Speaking of animals, about a half hour after he went out in the yard to play, he came running in crying to beat the band.

INTERLOCUTOR. Oh, what was the matter with the poor little dear?

END-WOMAN. The mule had kicked him!

INTERLOCUTOR. Great Scott! That innocent little child *kicked* by a vicious mule. Surely he didn't do anything to annoy the beast?

END-WOMAN. Oh, no! He was only trying to carve his initials in its flank. (*Pause for laugh.*) And cuss! Heavens and earth, you never heard such profanity.

INTERLOCUTOR. Self-expression! Wonderful thing, self-expression.

END-WOMAN (*looking at him in disgust*). Oh, he'd *love* you. Well, I tell you right now I didn't fail to let him understand that I thought it was terrible. I told him right off the bat that I had never heard such cussing since the day I was born.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, you should not have spoken so harshly to the little dear. But what did he say when you told him that you never heard such cussing since the day you were born?

END-WOMAN. He said he supposed they *did* cuss like the devil the day I was born. (*Pause for*

laugh.) One night I made him say his prayers and ask to be made a good little boy.

INTERLOCUTOR. That's the spirit—use moral suasion.

END-WOMAN. Rats! What he needed was an immoral spanking. Next afternoon he came in to me and said: "Aunty, you heard me say my prayers last night and ask God to make me a good little boy, didn't you?"

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah! See! It made an impression on him.

END-WOMAN. I said "yes" and then he said, "Well, He didn't do it, 'cause I been bad as hell all morning." (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Strange how impressionable a child is.

END-WOMAN. One day one of the neighbors called me on the 'phone and told me that she thought my nephew had thrown a brick at her little girl.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, boys will have their little innocent fun.

END-WOMAN. I asked her if he had hit the child, and she said that he had not.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, he missed his aim.

END-WOMAN. I told her that it couldn't possibly have been my nephew, for that kid can curve a brick.

INTERLOCUTOR. You are too hard on him, I feel sure.

END-WOMAN. Hard your foot! Why, I took him on a Sunday-school picnic and he darned near

caused a panic all by himself. There wasn't anything that any kid ever did at a picnic that my nephew didn't give a play. Inside of five minutes he had five different fights going, and was still as fresh as a daisy.

INTERLOCUTOR. I hope that you talked firmly to him.

END-WOMAN. Talk your foot. I gave him a blamed good spanking.

INTERLOCUTOR. Oh! You don't mean to say that you actually spanked that sensitive little soul in a public place?

END-WOMAN. Oh, no, I spanked him in the usual place, but I did it right out before everybody. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. You should not have blamed the child. It was just his excess animation. It would have been best to have found some employment for him, which would have kept him out of mischief.

END-WOMAN. That's exactly the way I figured it out, so I got him a job as a Western Union messenger boy.

INTERLOCUTOR. The very thing.

END-WOMAN. The boss, who was a friend of mine, told me after one day that he wouldn't be able to use him any longer.

INTERLOCUTOR. Poor lad, every hand turned against him. What was the complaint?

END-WOMAN. Well, you see there was a janitor in one of the swellest apartment houses in town who was as mean as a snake, and all the messenger

boys were afraid of him, so when a telegram came for someone who lived in the apartment house, they gave it to my kid nephew to deliver.

INTERLOCUTOR. Good gracious. That was like touching a match to a powder keg.

END-WOMAN. About a half hour later, the 'phone rang, and the janitor was calling up and asked the manager if they had a red-headed messenger boy working for them.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did the manager say?

END-WOMAN. He said "yes" and the janitor explained that the kid had come bursting in the beautiful lobby of the apartment house, when he should have entered at the servants' entrance. The janitor tried to put him out, and the kid got so mean that the janitor had to finally draw a gun on him.

INTERLOCUTOR. Heavens! He didn't shoot, did he?

END-WOMAN. That's just what the manager asked, and the janitor said, "No, I didn't shoot him, and I want to tell you right now *that he's got to give me my gun back.*" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. A boy like that will go far in this world.

END-WOMAN. This one will, anyhow, for I sent my sister a telegram this morning.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did you say in the telegram?

END-WOMAN (*gesturing as though writing*). "Am returning boy. Send me the earthquake."

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks to* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. A baritone solo entitled (*Name of song.*) will now be rendered by (*Name of first baritone. Baritone sings popular song with good arrangement for male quartette, who sing the chorus with him. For encore one chorus without accompaniment.*) Good-evening, ———. You know, I have been reading a very interesting article in the (*Name of local newspaper.*) about Japan.

END-MAN. Is that so? Now, you know, I'm glad you brought that up, for there is one thing about Japan that I have always been curious about.

INTERLOCUTOR. Perhaps I can enlighten you. What is it that puzzles you?

END-MAN. I understand that the Japanese people don't sit down to a table when they eat, like we do.

INTERLOCUTOR. That is true. A Jap sits right down on the floor and eats his meals.

END-MAN. And I've also heard that the Japanese people don't have mantelpieces in their homes.

INTERLOCUTOR. That is also wholly true.

END-MAN. Well, what I want to know is this: When a Jap boy disobeys his daddy, and the old man takes him out to the woodshed, and whales the tar out of him, what does he do at meal time when he can't sit down and there's no mantelpiece for him to use for a lunch-counter? (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I certainly can't answer that one, but I do know one very interesting fact,

and that is that the Japanese language does not contain one word of profanity.

End-Man. Do you mean to stand there and tell me that a Jap don't know how to swear?

Interlocutor. No, sir. Their language is unique in that respect. Not one word of profanity does a Jap know.

End-Man. Not even the common garden variety like damn?

Interlocutor. Not a syllable.

End-Man. That don't seem possible, does it? How in the world do the poor heathen people get along anyway?

Interlocutor. Why do you consider that profanity is indispensable?

End-Man. Well, for one thing, if a Jap don't know any cuss words, how in the world does he ever get his Ford engine started on a cold morning? (*Pause for laugh.*)

Interlocutor. You are a bug on the subject of a Ford, aren't you?

End-Man. I wouldn't drive anything else.

Interlocutor. I have often heard it said that a Ford will take you there and bring you back the same as a Packard.

End-Man. I'd rather be a young man's Ford than an old man's Packard.

Interlocutor. How many miles do you get on a gallon?

End-Man. It depends entirely upon what's in the gallon. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. No, no. I mean how much gas do you put in your gas-tank at a time.

END-MAN. Oh! Why, I only put a quart in it at a time.

INTERLOCUTOR. A quart? Really? What's the idea?

END-MAN. I'm trying to wean it. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Is a Ford a very fast car?

END-MAN. Well, some are faster than others. My Ford can do seventy-five miles per hour.

INTERLOCUTOR. Say, stop trying to kid me. There ain't a Ford in the world that can do seventy-five miles per hour.

END-MAN. Well, you understand that my Ford ain't an ordinary Ford.

INTERLOCUTOR. Not if it will make seventy-five miles an hour, it isn't. Just what have you done to it?

END-MAN. Well, I had the clutch rebored, over-size grease-cups installed, and then I had a racing mechanic put in a set of *Stutz glands.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Have you ever been pinched for going too fast?

END-MAN. No, but I have been *slapped* for going too fast. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I imagine that you drive the girls around quite a bit, don't you?

END-MAN. Well, once in a while I take one out for an airing.

INTERLOCUTOR. The girls love the country air, don't they?

END-MAN. Oh, boy! Last Sunday I took a girl from (*Name of city that is kidded a good deal locally.*) out for a ride, and I got on a road that I had never driven over before, and lost my way completely.

INTERLOCUTOR. By Jove, you must have felt embarrassed.

END-MAN. I thought I'd die! I just shut off the gas and looked at her like a fool.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did she have to say?

END-MAN. She wanted to know what I had stopped for.

INTERLOCUTOR. Naturally.

END-MAN. I simply had to confess that I had lost my bearings.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did she take it?

END-MAN. She said that I was one original bird. She said that *most* men claimed that they had run out of gas. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. People get off a lot of jokes about the Ford, don't they?

END-MAN. Yeh, they have to do it to keep up their self-respect.

INTERLOCUTOR. I didn't know until the other day that Henry Ford also manufactured the Lincoln car.

END-MAN. Oh, yes, he bought the factory some time ago. He figured that he needed it to break even.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why do you think that Henry Ford needs a high-priced car like the Lincoln to get even?

END-MAN. So that he can turn up his nose at a lot of folks that turn up *their* noses at the Ford. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I understand that you went on a picnic the other day and were taken sick.

END-MAN. Oh, yes, I had a terrible time! I thought I'd die! The doctor said it was ptomaine poison.

INTERLOCUTOR. You must have eaten something that had been left in tin too long.

END-MAN. That must have been it. My lunch was laying in the back of my Ford all afternoon. (*Pause for laugh.*) I took my mother on a two-weeks' motor trip this summer, and we had a wonderful time.

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose that the dear old lady enjoyed every minute of it.

END-MAN. No, I can't truthfully say that she did. We broke down so many times that she spent more time looking for trouble than looking at the scenery.

INTERLOCUTOR. Poor soul.

END-MAN. We had all kinds of trouble. Two tires blew out without the slightest provocation; one of the fenders fell off when a careless nurse girl ran into us with a baby-carriage; the radiator got mad and boiled over; the transmission grabbed at the clutch and got a couple of its teeth knocked out,

and finally, just at the end of the trip, the motor began to knock like a ladies' sewing circle.

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose that was the blow that killed Mother.

END-MAN. I thought I'd die! She said to me, "Son, what is that awful noise?"

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't suppose it did any good to go into a mechanical explanation with her.

END-MAN. No, so I just told her that it was carbon.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did that satisfy her?

END-MAN. She was the most disgusted old woman you ever saw. She said, "My gosh! Is *that loose, too?*" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. But after all, there is no car like a Ford, is there?

END-MAN. No, indeed. You know, they call the Ford the family car.

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, and I've always wondered why.

END-MAN. Well, you see, it has a hood for the old lady ——

INTERLOCUTOR. True.

END-MAN. And a muffler for the old man ——

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, yes, go on.

END-MAN. *And rattles for all the kids!* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I was walking by your house this morning, and saw your Ford in the back yard. It surely was a wreck. Body and doors all chewed up; fenders cut into ribbons, and the hood and run-

ning boards all gashed up. You must have been in a terrible smash.

END-MAN. Aw, shucks, no. My little baby brother Willie did that playing with the can opener.

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, folks, we are now going to give you a real treat. The (*Name of quartette.*) will carry on with the popular ballad that we all enjoy hearing (*Name of song. Mixed quartette, soprano, contralto, tenor and bass sing good standard number. For encore it would be better to introduce a short, snappy humorous number, such as is arranged for mixed quartettes.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C.) Another dance exhibition. Mr. and Miss (*or Mrs.*) (*Name of dancing team.*) will offer for your approval their own surprising interpretation of the (*Name of popular dance. Male and female comedians do a burlesque of the dance. They should not be on the stage at all previous to their number, and at its conclusion should sit on two chairs which were previously vacant. If this is not desired they may exit at the conclusion of the dance, and take one or two bows for encore.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over and addresses second* END-WOMAN *on* R.) You know, I have just been sitting there thinking, and it suddenly occurred to me that I haven't seen your husband since goodness knows when.

END-WOMAN. You haven't got anything on me. I haven't seen him for the last five years.

INTERLOCUTOR. Oh, I say! I had no idea of anything like that. What was the matter?

END-WOMAN. Oh, I don't know. I suppose that I must have said something that annoyed him.

INTERLOCUTOR. It doesn't seem to bother you very much.

END-WOMAN. Well, I figure that if I don't hear from him in the next ten or twelve years that he is really serious about not coming back.

INTERLOCUTOR. As I remember, he was a very plain spoken man.

END-WOMAN. Oh, boy! Didn't that baby say what he thought!

INTERLOCUTOR. The kind of a man who called a spade a spade.

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! And, oh, what he called the lawn-mower. (*Pause for laugh.*) Oh, he was a smart bird in some respects. I remember one time we were walking down-town together, and I said to him, "Oh, John, let's go into this store and look at some hats."

INTERLOCUTOR. The old married life gag of roping hubby for a new hat, eh?

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! But it didn't get over with Johnny. He told me that he only had a dollar with him.

INTERLOCUTOR. He might have known that you would have wanted to buy some little thing.

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! That's why the darned little sucker left his money home. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. He was a member of the (*Name of Local Club*), wasn't he?

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! I remember the first and only time I ever tried to get him on the 'phone at the club. A bell-hop answered the 'phone and when I asked him if my husband was there he told me that he wasn't,—before I had a chance to tell him which husband mine was.

INTERLOCUTOR. How could he tell whether your husband was there or not without learning his name?

END-WOMAN. I asked him that very thing and he said, "Lady, there ain't nobody's husband here *no time.*" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. As I recall it, he was very fond of the movies.

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! One night we went to see Mary Pickford, and during one of the most sad parts he struck a match and began hunting for something on the floor.

INTERLOCUTOR. I imagine that an usher bawled him out for lighting a match in the theatre.

END-WOMAN. Yes, but it didn't bother him in the least. He just told him that he had dropped a piece of taffy candy that he had been chewing on.

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you mean to sit there and tell me that he went to all that trouble just to find a piece of candy?

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! It had his false teeth stuck in it. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't want to hurt your feel-

ings, but someone told me that he was a right hardened sinner.

END-WOMAN. I had a time getting him to go to church. But one time we had a revival meeting, and he was one of the first to repent.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, that must have made you feel fine.

END-WOMAN. A committee of deacons waited on him and tried to get him to confess his sins.

INTERLOCUTOR. That's the only way for a repentant sinner to prove his sincerity. I suppose he did it.

END-WOMAN. He told them that it couldn't be done while the grand jury was in session.

INTERLOCUTOR. They should have told him that the Lord would forgive.

END-WOMAN. Oh, they did, but he said that the Lord wasn't on the grand jury. (*Pause for laugh.*) I remember one night I thought I'd give him a little surprise for supper, and I cooked a big pudding for him.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did he say about that?

END-WOMAN. The derned fool said that it was mediocre.

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't think that he should have said that, do you?

END-WOMAN. No,—the poor sap. It was *tapioca.* (*Pause for laugh.*) One time I tried to get some style about me, and got some of this here cube sugar for his coffee.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did he take to it?

END-WOMAN. The dumb trout tried to dip it up with his spoon.

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose that you corrected him promptly.

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! I told him to use the tongs.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did he take the correction?

END-WOMAN. It went right over his head. He said it wasn't necessary,—the sugar wasn't hot. (*Pause for laugh.*) And careless! My, how careless that man was. His buttons were always coming off.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, I hardly think that you can call that *his* fault. Possibly they were not sewed on properly.

END-WOMAN. Exactly what I said. He was so careless with his sewing. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Was he very economical?

END-WOMAN. Well, I must give him that much. He only used one garter.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did he keep his other sock up?

END-WOMAN. He used fly-paper. (*Pause for laugh.*) But he wouldn't stand up straight to save me. I didn't like to say anything about it, and for more than a year I let him get by with it, but finally it got on my nerves so badly that I asked him why in the world he didn't stand up like a man?

INTERLOCUTOR. What excuse did he give?

END-WOMAN. Claimed it couldn't be done. His

suspenders had been busted for over a year. (*Pause for laugh.*) He got into an awful scrap once.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did it happen?

END-WOMAN. Well, Blue-gum Bailey bit him in the ear because he kissed Blue-gum's bride after the ceremony.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why did Blue-gum object to the observation of that ancient custom?

END-WOMAN. Well, you see, it was *two years* after the ceremony. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Didn't your husband have a very close call with the undertaker one time?

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! They had to operate on him.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did the surgeon cut him open for?

END-WOMAN. Two hundred dollars.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, no. I mean what did your husband have?

END-WOMAN. Just exactly two hundred dollars. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Were you at the hospital when they performed the operation?

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! I was right on the job as soon as they brought him out of the operating-room.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did he stand it?

END-WOMAN. Well, you see, they ran out of ether and had to hit him on the head with a hammer two or three times to keep him unconscious. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose the after effects made him very sick.

END-WOMAN. I never saw such a sick human being in my life. They put his bed in between two other men who had been operated on three or four days before, and they were talking to each other across his bed about how careless their doctors had been when they were operated on.

INTERLOCUTOR. Not very pleasant conversation for a sick man to have to listen to.

END-WOMAN. The man on his right said that his doctor had sewed a pair of scissors up in his side, and they had to cut him open again to get them out.

INTERLOCUTOR. Horrible!

END-WOMAN. The other bird said almost the same thing happened to him, only it was a roll of bandages that they sewed up in his carcass.

INTERLOCUTOR. Criminal carelessness!

END-WOMAN. That kind of talk sure had my old man groggy.

INTERLOCUTOR. I can well understand that.

END-WOMAN. Yes, boy! And to cap the climax, his own doctor came into the room and said that he *couldn't imagine what he'd done with his hat.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. But you haven't yet told me what was the trouble with your husband.

END-WOMAN. Just plain laziness.

INTERLOCUTOR. Laziness?

END-WOMAN. Pure, unadulterated laziness. My husband was the laziest coon in the next two coun-

ties. He picked up a bottle of carbolic acid out of the medicine closet, saw that it wasn't what he wanted, but drank it rather than go to the trouble of reaching for the cough medicine. (*Pause for laugh.*)

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks down* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. A little nonsense by ———, who will sing (*Title of song. Third* END-MAN *on* L. *sings song with lots of topical verses—running in verses that have a local appeal.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks downstage and addresses audience.*) And now, Mr. ——— will sing (*Name of song. Basso sings typical bass solo, "Asleep in the Deep," or some song not quite so old of the same character.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to third* END-MAN *on* R.) Well, ———, what is your profession these days?

END-MAN. You mean my position in life?

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose that you might put it that way.

END-MAN. Why, I'se an exporter.

INTERLOCUTOR. You surprise me. I had no idea you knew anything about shipping merchandise to foreign countries.

END-MAN. Who said anything about shipping merchandise to foreign countries?

INTERLOCUTOR. That's what an exporter does. Isn't that what you mean?

END-MAN. Oh, no! I mean that I had been

working for the Pullman Company and they fired me. So now I'm an ex-porter.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why did the Pullman Company dispose of your services?

END-MAN. Well, you see, I went to a big party one night, and on my way home stopped in front of the ——— Hotel for a few minutes, and just because I got into a right hot argument with a taxi-driver a policeman came up and took me to jail for being drunk.

INTERLOCUTOR. But surely the mere fact that you were having an argument with a taxi-driver was not sufficient evidence to arrest you for being drunk.

END-MAN. Well, you see, it seems that there wasn't any taxi-driver there. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Did you have a good time at the party?

END-MAN. Say, I must have had the best time at that party that I ever had in my life.

INTERLOCUTOR. Must have? Why do you put it that way?

END-MAN. Why, I don't even remember being at it.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did your wife say when you got home?

END-MAN. Oh, she was furious. When I walked in the front door she was standing there with her hair all done up in curl papers. They looked just like horns.

INTERLOCUTOR. Caught red-handed, eh? What did you do?

End-Man. I tried to make out like I didn't know her.

Interlocutor. Tried to make out like you didn't know your own wife?

End-Man. You know how women are. Just you notice 'em a little, and right away they begin to think they're as good as you are. (*Pause for laugh.*)

Interlocutor. How did your encounter turn out?

End-Man. I just looked at her like she was a perfect stranger, and said, "Who are you?"

Interlocutor. The nerve of you.

End-Man. She tried to scare me by telling me that she was the devil.

Interlocutor. And you weren't frightened?

End-Man. No! I shook hands with her and told her that I certainly was glad to meet her. I said, "So you're the devil, eh? Well, I'm the guy that married your sister." (*Pause for laugh.*) Of course, I wasn't drunk, you understand, and I told her so in very plain terms, and then I undressed and retired in a very dignified and sober manner.

Interlocutor. Did you put it over?

End-Man. Well,—not entirely. She asked me, after about fifteen minutes, if I was sure that I was perfectly sober.

Interlocutor. Of course you said that you were.

End-Man. I told her that I was tee-totally sober.

Interlocutor. And what did she say to that?

END-MAN. She said, "Well, in that case would you mind taking this wet umbrella out of the bed and stop standing there in the umbrella-stand like a jackass?" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR (*examining bridge of* END-MAN'S *nose*). I didn't know that you wore glasses, ———.

END-MAN. I don't wear glasses. I never did.

INTERLOCUTOR. Then how do you happen to have that little dent across the bridge of your nose if you don't wear spectacles?

END-MAN (*feeling his nose a moment*). Oh, that? That comes from drinking so much out of fruit jars. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I can't understand how some men can get hold of whiskey with so little trouble. I certainly would like you to tell me where a man can get a drink of good whiskey.

END-MAN. Anywhere but the five-and-ten-cent store. (*Pause for laugh.*) You know, all this talk about likker makes me thirsty.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I'll go get you a glass of water.

END-MAN. I said *thirsty,* not *dirty.*

INTERLOCUTOR. You should not think about whiskey so much. Remember, one swallow doesn't make a summer.

END-MAN. No, but one swallow of this bootleg stuff will sure put *spring* into your step. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I'd like to ask you one question.

End-Man. Consider yourself shot full of information.

Interlocutor. If there were two barrels in a yard,—one full of water and one full of whiskey, and I turned a mule loose in the yard—which would he drink?

End-Man. The mule would drink the water, of course.

Interlocutor. Exactly! now, what does that prove?

End-Man. It proves that a mule is a jackass. (*Pause for laugh.*)

Interlocutor. Somebody told me that you had bought yourself a Packard. Is it true?

End-Man. Yes, yes! A rich uncle died and left me 20,000 dollars, and I bought the first two things that came into my mind.

Interlocutor. What was the other?

End-Man. A case of genuine pre-war likker.

Interlocutor. I suppose that you loaded the whiskey into the Packard and went off on a big party.

End-Man. No siree. You don't catch me running the risk of having some Federal officer finding all that booze in my brand new car and taking my Packard away from me.

Interlocutor. Well, how did you manage to carry the whiskey?

End-Man. Drunk it, of course.

Interlocutor. The whole case?

End-Man. Yep! And believe me, when a man

has a whole case of likker aboard he sure does know how to drive a Packard.

INTERLOCUTOR. I imagine that you were a terrible road hog.

END-MAN. On the contrary, I was very polite. I met a Ford car, and I turned out to let it pass.

INTERLOCUTOR. Good for you.

END-MAN. And then a few minutes later, I met a Dodge coming toward me.

INTERLOCUTOR. And I suppose that you also turned out and let the Dodge pass you?

END-MAN. Exactly! And then about a mile further, I met a Buick coming toward me.

INTERLOCUTOR. And politely turned out to let the Buick pass you, I presume?

END-MAN. I did that very thing. And I didn't meet another car. About a half hour later, though, I saw a concrete bridge coming toward me.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, ———, you couldn't have met a concrete bridge *coming* toward you.

END-MAN. But I did meet a concrete bridge coming toward me.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did you do?

END-MAN. Turned out to let the concrete bridge pass me also.

INTERLOCUTOR. Good heavens, what was the outcome of it?

END-MAN. I went back to town and bought a new Packard. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I have been told that there is a

certain soda fountain on (*Name of principal street.*) where a man can get some good Old Crow.

End-Man. I don't like Old Crow. I like squirrel whiskey.

Interlocutor. Why don't you like Old Crow? It's very good whiskey.

End-Man. Maybe so, but I don't like to fly—I just like to jump around a little bit.

(Interlocutor *walks down* c. *and addresses audience.*)

Interlocutor. And now, a little love duet, by Mr. and Miss (*Names of singers. Tenor and soprano sing love song hit from current musical comedy success. For encore repeat chorus only.* Interlocutor *walks over to third* End-Woman *on* l.) Do you know, one thing that has always puzzled me is why Adam was made first.

End-Woman. Well, it would certainly seem that you would know the answer to that, as much as you're around the ladies.

Interlocutor. What has my being around the ladies got to do with my knowing why Adam was made first?

End-Woman. He was made first so as to give him the chance of saying a few words without being interrupted. (*Pause for laugh.*)

Interlocutor. Now, now, you are too hard on your sex. It has not been my experience that women are such terrible talkers. This thing about

a woman always having the last word is pure bunk to my mind.

END-WOMAN. Well, I must agree with you there. There is one time that a woman *never* has the last word.

INTERLOCUTOR. And when is that?

END-WOMAN. When she's talking to another woman. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Who is your husband working for now?

END-WOMAN. Same old crowd. Me and the kids. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. By the way, how is the little baby getting on?

END-WOMAN. Oh, just fine,—and my, how that child loves his father.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, isn't that touching? The dear little tot has learned to love his daddy already.

END-WOMAN. You never heard of such devotion. Why, it actually stays awake all day so that it can sit up with its father all night. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. You should get the child a nurse.

END-WOMAN. That kid don't need no nurse.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, if it don't need a nurse, what does it need?

END-WOMAN. It requires the services of a night-watchman. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Marriage makes a wonderful change in a man, don't you think?

END-WOMAN. I *know* it. Before we were mar-

ried my husband used to say that he could listen to my sweet voice all night.

INTERLOCUTOR. What a poetic thought.

END-WOMAN. I suppose that when he said it he had no idea that I'd ever make him do it. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Does your husband ever remember how crazy he was about you before you were married?

END-WOMAN. That's just the trouble. He insists that he must have been raving crazy not to stay single.

INTERLOCUTOR. Just like a man, isn't it?

END-WOMAN. Before we were married, he tried to kiss me to death.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah, such passion.

END-WOMAN. Sometimes, even now, I suspect that he wishes that he had.

INTERLOCUTOR. I read that the Salvation Army is going to make a collection of men's cast-off clothing. Don't you think your husband would like to donate his?

END-WOMAN. Not a chance in the world.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why not? Doesn't he approve of the Salvation Army?

END-WOMAN. Oh, sure, he thinks the Salvation Army is a wonderful institution.

INTERLOCUTOR. Then he should be glad to donate his cast-off clothing.

END-WOMAN. I'll have you understand that my husband has other uses for his cast-off clothing.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, will you please tell me what he does with it.

END-WOMAN. He hangs it up carefully every night, and when he gets up every morning he puts it back on, and goes to work. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Does he still drive that truck for the wood and coal dealers?

END-WOMAN. No, he got mad because they made him do all the hard work.

INTERLOCUTOR. How was that?

END-WOMAN. Well, they wouldn't let him do anything but deliver hard coal.

INTERLOCUTOR. I can't see where that was any harder work than any of the rest of the drivers did.

END-WOMAN. That shows all you know about it. They let all the rest of the drivers deliver the *soft* coal. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I read to-day of an invention whereby an automobile can be driven from the back seat.

END-WOMAN. Oh, we have one of those.

INTERLOCUTOR. How much did it cost?

END-WOMAN. My husband said it wasn't the first cost so much as it was the upkeep.

INTERLOCUTOR. How does it work?

END-WOMAN. Well, I just sit back there and tell him how to drive. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. To hear you talk one would imagine that you were quarrelling all the time.

END-WOMAN. Oh, no, we've got to sleep *some* time.

INTERLOCUTOR. You probably overestimate the number of times that you quarrel.

END-WOMAN. No chance. I keep a diary of every fuss we have.

INTERLOCUTOR. And what do you call it?

END-WOMAN. I call it my scrap-book. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, you should be thankful that he never beats you as some other men do.

END-WOMAN. No, I'll have to admit that he has never given me a licking in my life.

INTERLOCUTOR. There!

END-WOMAN. He came near it once or twice, but I always managed to knock him out before he could land a lucky punch. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I have no sympathy for a man that beats his wife.

END-WOMAN. The man who can lick his wife don't *need* sympathy. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. If you don't stop talking that way you'll have me beginning to believe something that I heard last week.

END-WOMAN. What did you hear about me last week?

INTERLOCUTOR. I heard someone say that you broke an umbrella over your husband's head.

END-WOMAN. Yes, but (*Deprecatingly.*) that was just an accident.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I'm glad to know that it was accidental.

END-WOMAN. Yes, indeed! I had no more in-

tention of breaking that nice new parasol—— (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you ever kiss your husband when he comes home at night?

END-WOMAN. Do I? I'll say so. Just as soon as he pokes his thick head in the door at night I kiss him good.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I'm glad to know that you exhibit some signs of affection.

END-WOMAN. Lord, that ain't affection.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, if you don't call an act like that affection, what *do* you call it?

END-WOMAN. Investigation! (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I'm going to tell you a little secret.

END-WOMAN. What is it?

INTERLOCUTOR. Last Saturday I met your husband on the street, and asked him how you two were getting along, and he said that somehow you seemed to be drifting apart.

END-WOMAN. Well, the son-of-a-gun.

INTERLOCUTOR. And then I asked him if he ever thought to make you a present of a box of candy once in a while; or if he ever remembered to send you a bunch of roses occasionally, like he did before you were married, and if he ever took you to see a good show any more.

END-WOMAN. Something tells me that *I* have made a *serious* mistake.

INTERLOCUTOR. I regret to say that he confessed that such a thing never entered his mind, so I made

him promise that he would occasionally do those little things that are so close to a woman's heart, and he was so repentant that he made me go with him then and there and he bought you a big bunch of American Beauties, a five-pound box of chocolates and two theatre tickets for that evening.

END-WOMAN. Well, I'm a son-of-a-gun!

INTERLOCUTOR. And all during our talk to-night I have been trying to draw you out about how surprised you were when he got home, but you wouldn't take the hint.

END-WOMAN. Poor Henry! How I wronged you!

INTERLOCUTOR. What do you mean—wronged him?

END-WOMAN. Well, he came in the house that night later than usual, and he is usually late, and he called me in the hall and gave me that five-pound box of candy, then stuck that big bunch of American Beauties under my nose, and on top of all that told me that he was going to take me to see a good show.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ah! I can just picture your pleasure.

END-WOMAN. Pleasure your foot! I sat down on the floor and had a good old-fashioned cry. Poor Henry!

INTERLOCUTOR. Just like a woman.

END-WOMAN. I said to him, "Here it has been raining all day; the roof has been leaking; the cook has left; the biscuits are burnt to a crisp; the baby's

got the measles, and as if that wasn't enough to run me crazy here you come home *drunk!"*

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. ——— ——— (*Name of* END-MAN.) will give us his interpretation of the rag-time classic (*Name of song. First* END-MAN *on* L. *sings one verse and chorus of popular song. One chorus for encore, assisted by chorus.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to fourth* END-MAN *on* R.) Do you know, ———, I have wanted to have a good long talk with you for years and years.

END-MAN. Years and years?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, for years and years.

END-MAN. Well, all I've got to say is that it took you a mighty long time to get around to it.

INTERLOCUTOR. I wanted to have you tell me about your experience during the World War, when you served overseas.

END-MAN. Oh! You want to talk with the man who won the war!

INTERLOCUTOR. Not exactly that, but there are some things that I have been wondering about ever since America first entered the war.

END-MAN. And what might they be?

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, first thing that I can't understand is how did they ever manage to get you on the job.

END-MAN (*laughing at the joke on himself*). Doggone! You ain't no more surprised than I was. You see it was like this. When I *enlisted in the*

draft, ahem! they gave me a nice, shiny pick and shovel and set me to digging up the ground at Camp Lee, down near Petersburg, Virginia, and after I got all the land harrowed up between there and Washington, D. C., they put a lot of us colored boys on a train and carried us up to New York, marched us out onto a dock, and after a lot of nice ladies gave us some sandwiches and coffee, they marched us through a little door,—shut the lower half of the door, an' bless my soul, Mr. ———, what do you think happened?

INTERLOCUTOR. I can't imagine. What did happen when they marched you through the door and shut the lower half of it?

END-MAN. Well, suh, there was a great big whistle somewhere gave a couple of great long toots, and right before my very eyes,—*the dock sailed away!* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. And I suppose that the next thing you knew you were in France to pay your debt to Lafayette.

END-MAN. Not me. I never borrowed a nickel from one of them French pawn-shops in my life. No, they just told me that I had a job of fighting on hand, and asked if I wouldn't like to be in the cavalry.

INTERLOCUTOR. I imagine that you were tickled to death at the opportunity. Nothing to do but ride all day.

END-MAN. Not for me. I told them right off the bat that I didn't want no cavalry in mine.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why not?

END-MAN. Well, I figured it out this way. Whenever the gen'ral might happen to tell the bugler to sound the call Retreat, I didn't intend to be *hampered* by no hoss. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. But that wouldn't have been the case if you had a sure-footed horse.

END-MAN. Don't tell me about sure-footed horses. I worked for a man once that had a sure-footed horse, and that brute sure cured me.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did you ever ride him over rough, uneven ground?

END-MAN. I never rode him anywhere. Oh, how I disliked that hoss.

INTERLOCUTOR. Then how do you know that he was sure-footed?

END-MAN. Any hoss that can kick me in the same place three times before I can move is *sure-footed.* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Why didn't you try for the aviation service?

END-MAN. Well, I did consider it for a few hours. In fact a gent offered to take me on a little flight with him. And I went. I never miss an opportunity to make a mistake.

INTERLOCUTOR. You always were impulsive.

END-MAN. I always did talk too darned much. Well, suh, we got up nearly three thousand feet in the air, and that man just naturally scared the life out of me.

INTERLOCUTOR. Stunt flying, eh?

END-MAN. Naw! He did worse than loop the loop. He began to laugh in the strangest way, and when I asked him what the joke was, he said that he was laughing at the superintendent.

INTERLOCUTOR. Laughing at the superintendent?

END-MAN. Yes, he said that he supposed that by that time the superintendent would be *searching all over the asylum for him.* (*Pause for laugh.*) And just then the engine stopped.

INTERLOCUTOR. Merciful peace! In an airplane with a dead engine and a live lunatic! What did he do?

END-MAN. He said to me, "Nigger! get out and crank this Ford!"

INTERLOCUTOR. I hope that you kept cool.

END-MAN. Oh, man, I was so cool that I shivered. When that gentleman finally did get me back on good old terra cotta, I told the gen'ral that he could put me on sentry duty for the rest of my life.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did you get on as sentry?

END-MAN. Oh, very well, for most part, but one night I got a little confused.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did you become confused?

END-MAN. One night I heard a man coming toward me, and so I yelled at him, "Halt! Who goes there?"

INTERLOCUTOR. And what reply did the man make to your challenge?

END-MAN (*in imitation of scared darky*). He said, "M-o-s-e-s!"

INTERLOCUTOR. Just Moses?

END-MAN. Just Moses. Well, I couldn't for the life of me think of what the rules and regulations had to say about such a situation, so I thought for a moment and then replied, "Advance, Moses, and give the ten commandments." (*Pause for laugh.*) And then a few hours later I heard somebody else trying to walk through the lines, so I said to him, "Halt, who goes there?"

INTERLOCUTOR. And what did *he* reply?

END-MAN. He said, (*Roughly.*) "Shut up, you wall-eyed, bow-legged, sawed-off nut of a nigger or I'll knock your black block off."

INTERLOCUTOR. I can just imagine what you said to that smart-aleck.

END-MAN. Yes, suh. I just took off my cap an' made my bow, and said, "Pass, gentleman from No'th Carolina!" (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't suppose that you were ever court-martialed, were you?

END-MAN. Well, they never went to the expense of court-martialing me, but they did put me in jail once for going on a furlong.

INTERLOCUTOR. You mean a fur-*lough.*

END-MAN. No, I mean fur-*long.*

INTERLOCUTOR. You are mistaken—you went on a fur*lough.*

END-MAN. No, I went too *fur* and stayed too *long!* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I'll bet that when the war was over you got rid of anything that could possibly remind you of the army, didn't you?

END-MAN. Well, not entirely. I brought my army rifle home with me.

INTERLOCUTOR. What in the world did you want with that?

END-MAN. Well, I stood it out in our back yard, and every time that a good heavy rain came down, I put on my raincoat and walked out in the yard and said to it, "Rust, damn you, *rust!*"

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Our last solo for the evening will be Miss (*or Mrs.*) (*Name of singer.*) who will sing a more than beautiful ballad, entitled (*Name of song.*)

(*Soprano sings song, assisted by double quartette. One chorus for encore.* INTERLOCUTOR *walks over to fourth* END-WOMAN *on* L.)

END-WOMAN. Mr. ———, I wonder if you'd mind doing me a little favor.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, certainly, ———, I will be glad to.

END-WOMAN. Well, I done applied for a job down at de (*Name of largest local factory or institution.*) and dey told me to come down next Monday, and if I could pass dere Intelligence Test, dey would give me a job.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, what can I do for you in the matter?

END-WOMAN. Give me some intelligence. Tell me what to tell 'em.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, that would not be fair,

either to you or to the company, for it so happens that I have charge of making the intelligence tests for them; but I'll tell you what I will do,—I have a list of the questions that are asked right here with me, and I'll go over them with you right now.

END-WOMAN. Will you do dat?

INTERLOCUTOR (*taking paper from pocket*). Well, here's the first one: "Why is a woman's mind always cleaner than a man's?"

END-WOMAN. That's easy. She's always changing it. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. This one is an historical one: "Can you tell why Nero never had his hair cut?"

END-WOMAN. The old sucker was bald-headed. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. What gives your mother the most trouble in housekeeping?

END-WOMAN. Father! (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. For what is Switzerland famous?

END-WOMAN. Swiss cheese!

INTERLOCUTOR. Oh, no! Something far grander; something much more impressive than Swiss cheese.

END-WOMAN. *Limburger cheese!* (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. You get a goose-egg on that one. Here's the next one: "Do you dress for dinner, and to what extent?"

END-WOMAN. Sure, I do. I never eat a mouthful until I tuck my napkin around my neck. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Here's one to see what you know

about first aid work: "How would you go about reviving a man who has been almost drowned?"

END-WOMAN. Why, I'd dash some water in his face. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I'm afraid that you won't stand much of a chance in landing this job. Here's your last chance: "Do you brush your teeth regularly?"

END-WOMAN (*indignantly*). Of course not! There ain't no hair on *my* teeth.

INTERLOCUTOR (*folding paper and returning it to his pocket*). Well, you rate exactly 100% rotten. If that is a good specimen of your intelligence, I think you'd better try to land yourself a rich husband.

END-WOMAN. I tried that once, but I guess I didn't court him exactly right.

INTERLOCUTOR. Perhaps you weren't romantic enough.

END-WOMAN. That's just the trouble, I was too romantic, and he was too practical.

INTERLOCUTOR. I can't imagine your being too romantic. Tell me, ———, what did you say to your sweetie?

END-WOMAN. I said to him, "Darling, you are the sunshine of my life; your smile fills me like lightning fills the sky; with you by my side I defy the storms of life."

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I must admit that your fervor surprises me. How did he take it?

END-WOMAN. He wanted to know whether I

was making love or making a weather report. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. This is a materialistic age, isn't it? What did he say when he finally became convinced of your sincerity?

END-WOMAN. He told me that he was sorry to disappoint me, but that he had become engaged to another girl the night before.

INTERLOCUTOR. That was too bad, wasn't it? Did you acknowledge defeat?

END-WOMAN. You don't know me. I told him that was perfectly O. K., and asked him how about *next* week. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. I hope that he agreed to put you on his waiting list.

END-WOMAN. Oh, yes, he acted on my application at the regular monthly meeting and I was unanimously elected.

INTERLOCUTOR. I hope that you lived happily ever afterward.

END-WOMAN. Not a chance. I couldn't stand his inquisitive ways.

INTERLOCUTOR. Wanted to know all about you, did he?

END-WOMAN. Yes, if I didn't call on him every night, there was the dickens to pay.

INTERLOCUTOR. Jealous, was he?

END-WOMAN. No, it wasn't that. You see, he was a teacher in the high school, and he couldn't overcome his school-teaching habits.

INTERLOCUTOR. In what way?

End-Woman. Well, every time I missed a night, he wanted me to bring a written excuse. (*Pause for laugh.*) Say, Mr. ———, do you remember last week when you took me for a ride in the country?

Interlocutor. Yes, ———, I have been thinking of that ride ever since. I never thought that it was possible for anyone to be so ignorant of country life as you are.

End-Woman. Aw, go on, Mr. ———, what makes you think I'm ignorant about the country?

Interlocutor. Why, you asked such foolish questions. Anyone could see that you knew absolutely nothing about the country.

End-Woman. Go along, Mr. ———, what did I say to make you talk like that?

Interlocutor. Well, for one thing, when we passed that field with the stack of alfalfa in it, you were so ignorant that you wanted to know what kind of a house it was.

End-Woman. Yes, and what did you say it was?

Interlocutor. I told you that it was a haystack.

End-Woman. By golly, you don't know much about country life yourself! Who ever heard of *hay* growing in a *lump* like that! (*Pause for laugh.*)

Interlocutor. And then when we had dinner at the farmhouse, you made a perfect fool of yourself.

End-Woman. Ah! None of us are perfect, Mr. ———.

Interlocutor. I never was so embarrassed in

my life as I was when you told the farmer that thousands of bushels of turnips were ruined every year because people were too lazy to climb the turnip trees and pick them off, instead of standing on the ground and shaking the trees like they did.

END-WOMAN. Oh, shucks, I just meant that as a figure of speech. Everybody knows that turnips grow on bushes the same as watermelons. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. And on top of that you explained to him that your father made a fortune in the egg business. That was the blow that killed me.

END-WOMAN. Well, I must say that I can't see anything funny in the fact that my Dad was the first man in the world to plant eggs in the same patch with the ham vines. It just cut the cost of ham and eggs right in half, that's what it did. (*Pause for laugh.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. And what did you tell him when he asked you if you knew how to milk a cow?

END-WOMAN. I told him the plain, unvarnished truth. I told him that I *did* know how to milk a cow.

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, but that's not all that you told him.

END-WOMAN. I told him that I knew how to *milk* a cow, but that *I didn't know how to turn it off.*

(INTERLOCUTOR *walks* C. *and addresses audience.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. As our closing number for the

first part of our program, we offer our interpretation of George M. Cohan's rag-time patriotic masterpiece, "You're a Grand Old Flag."

(INTERLOCUTOR *himself sings first verse of "You're a Grand Old Flag" or, if he is not a really capable vocalist, the first tenor should sing the verse. The chorus should introduce a very prettily dressed girl as* "MISS LIBERTY," *with a large American flag draped about her as a costume, who enters during the singing of the song. Small American flags should be furnished each member of the circle, including* END-MEN *and* WOMEN, *which should be concealed behind each chair before the performance, and brought out at the most effective moment, as indicated below. For an encore to this closing number, and likewise as an encore to the first part, the entire chorus should be sung with some simple drill or cotillion figures performed by the entire company, and at the last line of the chorus,." Keep your Eye on the Grand Old Flag," a huge American Flag should be dropped back of the entire company as a curtain, and each member of the company point his flag toward it.*)

VERSE.

There's a feeling comes a stealing, and it sets my brain a reeling,
When I'm listening to the music of a military band.
Any tune like Yankee Doodle simply sets me off my noodle,

It's a patriotic something that no one can understand.

ENTIRE CHORUS.
Way down South in the land of Cotton

SOLO.
Melody untiring,—ain't that inspiring?

ENTIRE CHORUS.
Hurrah, hurrah! We'll join the jubilee.

SOLO.
And that's going some, for the Yankees, by gum!

(*Entire chorus stands at attention and salutes as* MISS LIBERTY *enters,* L.)

ENTIRE CHORUS.
Red, white, and blue, I am for you,

SOLO.
Honest, you're a grand old flag.

(*Entire* CIRCLE *whips out small American Flags and holds them at salute.*)

CHORUS.
You're a grand old flag,—you're a high-flying flag,
And, forever, in peace, may you wave.

(*Balladists only shoulder their flags like rifles, and march down front,—*END-MEN *shoulder their flags and march to places vacated by balladists.*)

CHORUS.
You're the emblem of the land I love,
The home of the free and the brave.

(*Balladists divide evenly, and march to sides of stage, and* END-MEN *march down* C. *to places vacated by balladists.* MISS LIBERTY *turns her back to the audience, and marches back to* INTERLOCUTOR'S *seat, where she turns again and faces audience.*)

CHORUS.

Every heart beats true under red, white and blue,
Where there's never a boast or a brag.

(*Entire company back-step and form half circle with* MISS LIBERTY *in* C., *soloist walking over to* R.)

CHORUS.

But should auld acquaintance be forgot?

(*Entire company point their flags toward* MISS LIBERTY.)

CHORUS.

Keep your eye on the grand old flag.

CURTAIN

(*Encore as noted above, with large American Flag dropping at end of chorus.*)

FINAL CURTAIN

VIII

SHOULD HUSBANDS SUFFER?

VIII

SHOULD HUSBANDS SUFFER?

CHARACTERS

DIANA BERRYOU, *a glutton for widowhood.*
HAMMOND EGGLESTON, *a candidate for the axe.*

SCENE.—*Interior setting in one. Tea-table,* C., *with tea things daintily set upon it. Chairs on either side of table. Small davenport, or settee, large enough for two people to sit,* L., *pedestal lamp at one end of it, and tabourette with telephone at other end.*

(*Discovered,* DIANA BERRYOU, *putting finishing touches to the tea-table. She is a fine looking woman of middle age, a "high-brown," dressed in the height of fashion; of pleasant manner and a deceptive softness, which is of such thin veneer that the baser metal shows through whenever she gets upon the spoor of her ruling passion. Which passion is the collection of life insurance. 'Phone rings, and* DIANA *crosses over* L., *and sitting down on the settee picks up 'phone, and holds the following conversation.*)

DIANA. Don't be afraid of the neighbors—this is no party line. (*Pause.*) Hello, hello! Come on, unload your mind,—the dock is made of concrete, too. (*Pause.*) Yes, this is Mrs. Berryou; yes, I

put an ad in the paper for a husband,—whose husband are you? (*Pause.*) Never been married?—What's the matter with you? Too slow or too fast? (*Pause.*) Oh, just naturally lucky! Well, if that's the case why are you trying to stick your neck in a noose at this stage of the riot? (*Pause.*) Oh, I see! You lost your rabbit's foot, and know you're going to get it in the neck sooner or later. (*Pause.*) Well, tell the elevator boy to throw you off when he wants to get even with me. (DIANA *hangs up the 'phone.*) Can you imagine a man answering a matrimonial advertisement just because he walked under a ladder and a black cat crossed his path? He said he knew bad luck would get him in the end, so he might as well meet it half-way, and get used to suffering as soon as possible.

(*Enter* HAMMOND, R. *He is a short negro of the shuffling, apologetic type; shy, diffident and easily embarrassed, but withal, one who doesn't require that a brick drop on his head to realize that his position is none too secure. He is unusually slow in his gait, even for a slow man, moving somewhat after the manner of an elephant gingerly walking over an uncertain bridge, testing each board before he trusts his whole weight on it, and with his hands outspread as though feeling his way in the dark.*)

HAMMOND. Oh, fair lady,—don't look at me wid dem radio eyes. You fills my vest wid static!

DIANA. Sit down on that seat before your feet

sprout splinters. A slow motion picture of you going through a graveyard at full speed would make you appear to be standing still and leaning backwards. (HAMMOND *walks with exaggerated caution across the stage, and sits down on the settee.*) A man who walks like that would be put in jail on circumstantial evidence if a chicken was stolen within a hundred miles of him. A gait like that would make a hen-coop shudder.

HAMMOND (*smiling wanly at her*). Lady, dat cautious Charleston dat I performs when I walks is caused by environment, excitement, and previous condition of servitude.

DIANA. What kind of a job did you have to make you pedestrianize like a sleep-walker on a tight-rope?

HAMMOND. I was a truck driver in a dynamite factory, dat was located next door to the testing grounds of a steam roller factory.

DIANA. And so you decided that you would be better off answering an ad to make a widow lady happy,—object matrimony, eh?

HAMMOND. Well, lady, to tell you the truth, I would have much rather stayed dere with all dat nice, playful, kind-hearted dynamite any day dan take a chance like dis, but something sorta happened dis morning.

DIANA (*walking over and sitting down beside him*). Indeed?

HAMMOND. Yessum! Dis morning, jus' as I walked up to de factory door, one of dem steam rollers got loose and ran right smack into de other

side of de dynamite factory, and I lost my job right den and dere.

DIANA. Do you mean to tell me that the dynamite factory blew up?

HAMMOND. Higher than the Army and Navy Air Service.

DIANA. Well, at that, I don't imagine it was the first job you ever lost.

HAMMOND. Well, no, I can't say that it was, but it WAS the first job that ever blew up right in my face.

DIANA. What is your name, dearie?

HAMMOND. My name is Eggleston, and yours seems to be Speed.

DIANA. And what follows Eggleston?

HAMMOND. Nothing follows Eggleston. I'm always at the end of the procession.

DIANA. I mean, what is your last name?

HAMMOND. *Dat* is my last name. E double egg o-l apostrophe s-t-stun, Eggleston.

DIANA. Well, in that event, what is your first name?

HAMMOND. Oh! My first name is Hammond.

DIANA. Hammond Eggleston, what a romantic, mouth-filling name.

HAMMOND. Yeh, ain't it? Everybody calls me Ham and Eggs, and dat's de mouth fillingest name dere is.

DIANA (*coyly*). MY name is Diana.

HAMMOND. Well, fortunately, nobody cares.

DIANA. Diana Berryou.

HAMMOND. Dat would be a wonderful name for an undertaker. Die an' I Bury You.

DIANA. Do you sing?

HAMMOND. Oh, yes, indeed, I used to have a job in a bird store training the birds to sing.

DIANA. The canaries?

HAMMOND. No, the hoot owls.

DIANA. Would you like to sing anything?

HAMMOND. Sure,—anything!

DIANA (*rising*). Very well then, you sing——

HAMMOND. I would be delighted to ventilate my tonsils.

DIANA. —and I'll go down-stairs and rattle the grate in the furnace. (HAMMOND'S *elation deflates as* DIANA *exits,* L. HAMMOND *introduces specialty song and dance, with no encore other than a bow. Enter* DIANA, L. *She has made a quick change to a deep mourning costume, with veil hanging down her back.* HAMMOND *doesn't pay much attention to the costume at first but its significance becomes plain in short order to his mounting disquiet.* DIANA, *effusively.*) Oh, I never had any idea that you had such a *wonderful* voice.

HAMMOND (*flattered, but modest withal*). Oh, shucks, you ought to hear me render Sweet Adeline in four parts.

DIANA. I should imagine that when you got through Sweet Adeline would be lucky if she had only been rendered into four parts.

HAMMOND. I comes by it honestly! My father sang in the Metropolitan Opera Company for years.

DIANA. Indeed? What did he sing in the Metropolitan Opera Company?

HAMMOND (*cupping his hands to his mouth, and striding about the stage like a call-boy and chanting in a sing-song voice*). Every-body ready for the first act! Every-body on the stage for the first act! Every-body ready ——

DIANA (*interrupting*). I think that with a voice like yours you would choose an operatic career also.

HAMMOND. Well, I just can't make up my mind whether to be a tenor or a barrentone.

DIANA. Well, it seems to me that your voice is as barren of tone as any that I ever heard. (HAMMOND *bows his acknowledgment of the compliment.*) You could make a fortune if you went to New York.

HAMMOND. Would you suggest my going to see Mr. Hammerstein or Mr. Gatti Pazzaza?

DIANA. Neither. You should see the station master at the Grand Central Station. You would be a hit announcing trains. *Nobody* would ever be able to understand a word you said.

HAMMOND. Well, I guess this is about as good a time as any to change the subject. I came to see you in answer to this ad. (*He takes a newspaper out of his pocket and reads.*) "Wanted: Intelligent, brave, clever and handsome young man; must be able to sing tenor, bass, soprano, alto, wash dishes and make noodle soup. Successful applicant will be given position as husband to rich widow as long as he lives. Apply, with paid-up life insurance

policy, to Mrs. D. Berryou, Dinge Apartments, Dingy Court." Did you write dat ad?

DIANA. Yes, I wrote it. Does anyone you know fill the bill?

HAMMOND. Lady, you is looking at de answer to an ad-writer's prayer.

DIANA (*taking paper from him and reading*). Intelligent! (HAMMOND *clears his throat modestly.*) Brave! (HAMMOND *scowls ferociously and shadow-boxes a moment.*) Clever! (HAMMOND *tries to do a few soft-shoe dance steps, tripping on his own toe before he can prove his case.*) And, handsome. (HAMMOND *adjusts his tie, pulls down his vest, tips his derby over one eye, and struts like a peacock.*) And so you think that you answer my specifications?

HAMMOND. The only thing that bothers me, Lady, is how could you write such a perfect description of me without knowing me personally?

DIANA. Well, it's a good thing that I didn't put anything in it about modesty, for it's certain that you've never said a cross word to yourself since you grew up.

HAMMOND. I care not who makes a nation's laws,—so long as I write its prescriptions.

DIANA. How about the paid-up life insurance policy? Have you one of those?

HAMMOND. Oh, lady! Ten thousand dollars will be paid my widow upon proof of my forward pass.

DIANA. Ten thousand dollars? Well, you are better qualified for the job than I supposed. How

did you get hold of a ten thousand dollar life insurance policy?

HAMMOND. Lady, I served my country in the great Petting Party across the Big Bath.

DIANA. Ah, a veterinary!

HAMMOND. Lady, I served it—not curried it.

DIANA. And you took out a ten thousand dollar war risk insurance policy?

HAMMOND. Dat was the biggest one dat dey had.

DIANA. Were you a married man?

HAMMOND. Naw, I had too much sense for a thing like dat until I got gassed and lost my powers of resistance.

DIANA. Well, if you didn't have any dependents, I don't see what good a ten thousand dollar life insurance policy would have been to you.

HAMMOND. Well, you see, I figured it out this way! When the time came for the heavy fighting, the ginral would say, All uninsured niggers in de front line trenches, all five thousand dollar niggers in de reserves, and all ten thousand dollar niggers hang 'round headquarters and wash dishes.

DIANA. You've got more sense than I gave you credit for, and I wouldn't be surprised if you weren't exactly the man I'm looking for. (DIANA *sits in chair on right of tea-table.*) Do you feel like a cup of tea?

HAMMOND. No, ma'am. Do I *look* like a cup of tea?

DIANA. Silly, I only invited you to have a bit of refreshment with me.

HAMMOND (*sitting down in chair on left and putting his derby on the floor beside him*). I don't care so much for these afternoon tea parties.

DIANA. Why not, Hammy, dear?

HAMMOND. Well, the last one I went to broke up in a fight.

DIANA. Gracious, what precipitated the delirious debacle?

HAMMOND. Oh, no! Nothing so contagious! I said it broke up in a fight.

DIANA. What caused the fight at the tea party?

HAMMOND. The hostess insisted on serving tea.

DIANA. Oh, I hope you like tea. All of my husbands were great tea drinkers.

HAMMOND. *All* of your husbands?

DIANA. Every single one of them.

HAMMOND. Lady, how many husbands is you had?

DIANA. Alas, but twelve.

HAMMOND. Good garden peas! What became of them all?

DIANA. All gone. (*She dabs at her eyes with her handkerchief.*) They just faded and died like a bunch of big American Beauty roses. (*She breaks down and sobs.*)

HAMMOND (*upset at the sight of tears, reaches for his hat and edges off his seat, only to drop the hat and extend his hand uncertainly in* DIANA'S *direction, but draws back in alarm as a howl of anguish breaks forth from the bereaved widow*). There, there, lady, don't cry.

DIANA (*stifling her sobs*). Ah, it looks like I'm never going to be able to get a good start with husbands any more. I feel like a failure.

HAMMOND. Failure? Say, lady, if George Washington was the Father of the Country, you sho is qualified as the Wife of the World.

DIANA. Oh, you only want to flatter me, but I guess it's like Mother often said—the first hundred husbands are the hardest.

(DIANA *passes the cake to* HAMMOND, *who takes a piece in spite of an obvious feeling that everything is not so good.*)

HAMMOND. Lady, you talk about husbands like Henry Ford does about flivvers.

DIANA. And you'd never believe how tenderly I nursed my husbands when they were in their last sicknesses.

(*She pours tea, and gives* HAMMOND *a cup, who stirs but does not drink it.*)

HAMMOND. What did they die of?

DIANA. Poison! (HAMMOND *looks at the piece of cake suspiciously, puts it on his plate gently, and gropes for his hat.* DIANA, *reminiscently.*) Ah! how it would wring my heart to see them writhing in pain, and how tenderly I nursed them; with what tireless devotion I attended their slightest desire, and with what patience I hung over their bedsides night and day.

HAMMOND. Did you do that to all of them?

DIANA. Every one of them. I even refused to let a doctor come near them.

HAMMOND. Were they all insured?

DIANA. Every one of them.

HAMMOND. For much?

DIANA. Ten thousand dollars each.

HAMMOND. The advertisement said that you were rich.

DIANA. I have $120,000 in the bank.

HAMMOND (*after trying to figure something out on his fingers*). How much is twelve times ten thousand dollars?

DIANA. Exactly one hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

HAMMOND. *Lemme get out of here.*

(*He rises and tries to exit,* L., *but* DIANA *restrains him and sets him on the settee,* L.)

DIANA. Oh, surely you don't think for a moment ——

HAMMOND. Lady, I only knows that when I see feathers hanging on the cat's whiskers and the canary bird cage is empty, I don't waste no time thinking. (DIANA *sits down beside him.*)

DIANA. Well, I want you to know that I wouldn't poison a big, handsome hero like *you.* (HAMMOND *swells a bit—but just a bit.*) Why, we're not *married* yet.

(HAMMOND *deflates like a punctured toy balloon, and pushes her away from him.*)

HAMMOND. Yes, and that's just fifty-fifty.

DIANA. What do you mean, fifty-fifty?

HAMMOND. Fifty per cent. *not* married, and fifty per cent. not *going* to be.

DIANA. Ah, what can I ever say to make you believe in me?

HAMMOND. Lady, I DO believe in you,—I believe you're as tender as a warship!

DIANA. Then you must join me in a cup of tea. (*She goes to the table and brings the cup of tea to* HAMMOND, *who takes it gingerly.*) This is the finest Chinese oolong.

HAMMOND. Here, take it back! Take it back!

(*He tries to hand it back to* DIANA, *but she refuses to take it.*)

DIANA. Why, what's the matter?

HAMMOND. None of your Chinese So-Long for me.

DIANA. Not so long. Oolong. That means "good tea" in the Chinese language.

HAMMOND. And "so long" is good-*bye* in *any* language.

DIANA. Well, just to show you how harmless it is, you drink a cupful and then *I'll* drink a cupful.

HAMMOND. Well, that's fair enough. (*He drinks it down.*) By the way, lady, to what do you attribute your success in building up a fortune of $120,000?

DIANA (*in a moment of thoughtlessness*). Purely to a knack of making tea. (HAMMOND *emits a yelp,*

drops his cup, takes a blotter out of his pocket and begins to eat it.) What's the matter?

HAMMOND. That tea!

DIANA. What's that you're eating?

HAMMOND. A blotter!

DIANA (*taking insurance policy from his pocket*). Quick, sign your name on this paper, and I'll get you some medicine. (HAMMOND *signs frantically.*) Now wait here until I come back.

HAMMOND. What was that paper I signed?

DIANA. It makes your life insurance payable to me. (*With a wild yell,* HAMMOND *falls into* DIANA'S *arms. She plops him on the settee indifferently, and walks over to the telephone.*) Main 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. (*Pause.*) Hello, is this the newspaper office? Well, this is Mrs. Diana Berryou. Please run my *regular* ad again to-morrow.

CURTAIN

IX

A BOOKFUL OF JAZZ

IX

A BOOKFUL OF JAZZ

Scene in Two. Cyclorama encircling stage. At right of stage is Grand Piano, and seats for half of the orchestra. At left are drummer's traps and seats for the rest of the orchestra.

Between the two groups of seats is an open space from ten to fifteen feet in width, and in it, almost touching the cyclorama, is a huge "book cover," about eight feet wide by twelve feet high. This book cover is painted a flashy yellow, and in flaming red letters of box-car type, the title:

A
BOOK
OF
JAZZ

The book cover is hinged and is opened and shut with two wires, fastened to the bottom of it, one being controlled from the right wings, and the other from the left wings.

The pages of the book are of white wrapping paper, stretched on skeleton frames, the same size as the cover, and the number of the leaves depends entirely upon the number of entrances that are made while the book is being used. There is a separate page or frame for each leaf in the Book of Jazz, on which is printed the description or name of the particular disciple of Jazz that it introduces.

As each page is shown the performer featured enters by the simple expedient of breaking through the paper page. Exits, however, must be made into the wings in the orthodox manner.

Each time that a performer enters the cover of the Book of Jazz first opens to permit the entrance, and then closes to permit the insertion of a fresh sheet by working the wires that lead into the wings, in order that when the cover is opened again a fresh page with a different legend is shown through which the performer or performers indicated makes entrance. And so on, and on.

This act is no more or less than a musical number of the vaudeville revue type, with no attempt at dialog, pantomime or humor being injected into it. Absolutely no encores should be permitted, other than a bow or two, and the whole act should be gone through in a businesslike and prompt manner, with alertness the key-note. Everybody should be "on their toes"; entrances should be made right on the "dot," and each performer should stand back of his "page" long before the time for his entrance.

As each new page is disclosed, the spot light should be focused on it, with a different colored light for each entrance, if possible. As soon as an entrance is made, the light should be spread to include the entire stage, except in the instance of dance numbers, which should be executed under a moving spot light that follows the performers wherever they are.

When the curtain rises the stage is empty and entirely dark. The spot light should be focused on the

title of the book: "A Book of Jazz" and after a moment the cover should slowly open and disclose the first page, on which is printed

"JAZZ
IVORY"

and the pianist should enter, breaking through the paper page. He stands in front of the Book of Jazz a moment, bows to the audience, walks over to the piano, and begins to play the first selection. This selection, by the way, should be one that gives each musician the opportunity to display his agility in a jazzy way immediately after his entrance, but each instrument and performer should tone his performance down immediately upon the entrance of another musician. In other words, the opening number gives each member of the orchestra the "spot" for a moment, and it should be his unreservedly during this period.

The spot light follows the pianist, and the cover of the Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, disclosing a new page, on which is printed:

"JAZZ
BANJO"

and the ukulele player enters, breaking through the paper page. He stands in front of the Book of Jazz a moment, bows to the audience, walks over to his seat, followed by the spot light, and does his little bit, accompanied by the piano.

The Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, disclosing a fresh page, bearing the caption:

"JAZZ
GROANS"

and the saxophone player enters, breaking through the paper page. He stands in front of the Book of Jazz cover a moment, bows to the audience, walks over to his seat, followed by the spot light, and does his moment musical, accompanied by the pianist and ukulele player.

The Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, disclosing a new sheet, bearing the printed title:

"JAZZ
WHISTLE"

and the piccolo player enters, bursting through the paper page. He stands in front of the Book of Jazz cover for a moment, makes his bow, walks to his seat, and does his specialty, accompanied by the others on the stage. The spot light follows him and remains on him while he is playing.

The Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, disclosing a new page, reading:

"SLIDING
JAZZ"

and the trombone player enters, breaking through the paper sheet. He stands in front of the Book of Jazz for a moment, takes his bow, walks to his seat, and does his specialty under the spot light, accompanied by the members of the orchestra.

The Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, a fresh sheet in place, bearing the legend:

"PERPETUAL
JAZZ
MOTION"

and the drummer enters, coming through the page in such a whirlwind that he brings most of it with him. He bows most snappily, races to his drums, and goes wild over his traps, running the gamut of each instrument that his outfit contains, accompanied by the other members of the orchestra. As before the spot light plays on the soloist.

The Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, showing the new page, reading:

"JAZZ
FIDDLE"

and the violinist and leader enters through the page

in the regulation manner. He bows, and walks a few feet downstage, enough to permit the closing of the book cover, and plays the finish of the open ing number with the orchestra.

A dreamy waltz number follows, featuring the violinist, with the spot light on him.

The Book of Jazz closes and a new page is inserted.

The violinist, at the close of his number, takes a bow, and walks over to his place in the orchestra.

The spot light returns to the cover of the Book of Jazz, which opens, and a new page shown, reading:

"VOCAL
JAZZ"

and the vocalist enters, bows, and walks or dances downstage, singing a lively rag-time song, preferably done with catchy rhythm, or, to be more specific, one with unusual un-rhythmic time, following out the futuristic thought.

The Book of Jazz closes and a fresh page is inserted.

The spot light follows the singer to his exit, at right, and returns to the Book of Jazz. Here care should be taken not to open the book too quickly in order to permit the singer to return for his bow, with the spot light darting back over to right, to pick him up as he enters, bows and exits. It then returns to the Book of Jazz, which opens, disclosing a page, reading:

"JAZZ
FEET"

and a dancing team enters, bows, and breaks into a novelty dance, replete with trick steps, intricate and difficult. A whirlwind finish should be provided and a bow in the center of the stage, followed by a quick running exit, left. The spot light follows the dancers during the whole number, and returns to the Book of Jazz, but immediately returning to the exit to pick up the dancers who return for their encore bow. The spot light returns to the Book of Jazz.

The Book of Jazz has again closed, and opens bringing to view a new page, entitled:

"JAZZLESS
JAZZ"

and the soprano and alto enter, through the page, arms entwined about each other's waists, curtsey, and walk downstage singing a catchy, tuneful, popular song, stressing a syrupy close-harmony note, à la Barber-Shop chord.

The Book of Jazz closes and a last page is inserted.

The spot light follows the singers to the exit, goes to the Book of Jazz, returns to the exit to pick up the singers, who take a bow and exit, right.

The Book of Jazz opens, and discloses fresh page, reading:

"FINIS
JAZZ"

The orchestra plays a wild, novelty number, the

spot light darting from side to side, as jazzy as the orchestra. Colored gelatins should be used to add a kaleidoscopic touch of color to the spot light.

Noise is the order of the finale, and every member of the orchestra should outdo himself in freakishness. The selection should end in a crash, and members of the orchestra make a running exit through the page.

CURTAIN

For encore, the entire cast of this act assembles on the stage, with the soloists in the center; the curtain rises, and they take a bow, both to the audience and to each other, and

FINAL CURTAIN

X

THE GO-GETTER

X

THE GO-GETTER

CHARACTERS

Co-Co, *King of the Kannibal Islands.*
Aba, *his first wife.*
Abadaba, *his second wife.*
Abadabadaba, *his third wife.*
Qu Tee, *his daughter.*
Tee Hee, *her companion.*
Mush, *the prime minister.*
Mutt, *his son.*
Monk, *the official dirty-worker.*
Goliath Gettysburg Gallegher, *a traveling salesman.*
General Jones, *his baggage master.*
The Royal Cook.
Officers of the Royal Guard, Subjects, etc.

SCENE.—*The throne of the King of the Kannibal Islands, in the Royal Gardens on the afternoon of the marriage of* Princess Qu Tee. *Palms abound and flowers add a touch of beauty to the scene. At the* r. *is the throne of the King of the Kannibal Islands, with a canopy to shield the august person from the sun. The throne sets upon a raised dais, and the throne-seat, itself, is wide enough for two to sit upon. The drapery of the canopy forms a curtain falling to the floor, back of the throne-seat, concealing the seat of the first wife of the*

potentate. On the left of the stage is the seat of the Prime Minister,—slightly raised from the ground. Down C. *is a plain board or log bench. Entrances* R. *and* L. *Full stage.*

(*Discovered* MUSH, MUTT *and* MONK. MUSH *is an old, crafty campaigner, versed in having his way with the King, by allowing him to think that all ideas originate in the royal brain. He is as ugly as mankind ever gets to be through natural processes, and, with the exception of his audiences with the King, at which times he is hypocritically obsequious, and when he is talking to his son,* MUTT, *at which times he is blindly idolatrous, his manner has all the gentle charm of a casual murderer. His idea of official grandeur is a worn-out admiral's coat, gay with epaulets. This ends his simple needs for decoration and cover, for his feet and legs are bare.* MUTT, *his son, is effeminate, lazy, petulant and cowardly—the type that so often springs from the loins of aggressive, industrious stock. He, of all people on the Kannibal Islands, shows no fear of the Prime Minister, and very little respect for the King. His idea of what the well-dressed man will wear consists of the shirt of a baseball uniform and a pair of striped pajama pants. His feet are bare, after the universal custom of the Island.* MONK *is a villainous scoundrel who does all of the Prime Minister's dirty work, wicked in appearance and villainous in manner. He looks wholly capable of doing any odd jobs required of him from mur-*

der to arson. A tasty breech clout begins and ends his bodily decoration.)

MUSH (*furiously*). Do you mean to tell me, scoundrel, that you have failed to win over the King's Royal Guards to our revolution?

MONK. Alas, Excellency, they are so loyal to the King that it is worth my very life to come out in plain words and even suggest such a thing.

MUSH. Are you sure that the rest of the army is on our side?

MONK. Oh, yes, Excellency,—all twelve of them.

MUSH. And it is arranged that as soon as my son Mutt is married to the Princess Qu Tee that old Co-Co is to be deposed in my favor?

MONK. Everything is in readiness, Excellency.

MUSH. And it is also arranged between you and me that an accident will happen to old Co-Co sometime after my coronation?

MONK. A very sad accident, Excellency, which will make the fair Abadabadaba a widow.

(MUSH *licks his lips expectantly.*)

MUSH. And you have arranged that all the weapons of the Royal Guard will be stolen before the revolution?

MONK. The King's guard will be utterly defenseless when the signal is given.

MUSH. Good! You may go and collect taxes for the balance of the afternoon.

MONK. Ah, thank you, Excellency. Thank you, Excellency.

(*Exit* MONK, R. MUSH *turns to* MUTT, *who has not been paying the slightest attention to the foregoing dialog, and beams on his offspring.*)

MUSH. Ah, my beautiful Mutt! This is indeed the happiest day of my life.

MUTT. Say, you old idiot, do you know that one of your speed cops tried to arrest me on the beach yesterday afternoon for driving my speed turtle three miles per hour?

MUSH. There, there, Petty, you know how it is. The King is determined to stamp out this reckless speed on the part of the younger set, and insists that any person driving a stream-line turtle faster than two and a half miles per hour be reported and fined.

MUTT. Well, I want to tell you right now that I'm going to drive that old racer of mine as fast as he can trot, and I don't want any of your old traffic officers turning him over on his back again when he's running at full speed.

MUSH. There, there, darling. Popper will tell the chief of the traffic squad that you have been appointed messenger boy, and you may drive your turtle up to and including *four miles per hour.*

MUTT. And another thing. My bank account is overdrawn 375 cocoanuts and sixty-three grapefruit.

MUSH. Merciful heavens, do you intend to bankrupt your poor old father?

MUTT. Now, just lay off that stuff. I can't be a leader in our best society on a measly allowance each month, so you might as well go and tell the

cashier that when I put my noseprint on a fish-skin check that you will shell out.

MUSH. Of course, my sweetheart, everything shall be as you wish. Your will is your poor old father's law. (*Enter* QU TEE *and* TEE HEE, R. QU TEE *is indeed a cutie. Young, pretty, sweet and happy, she is a prize in her own right, and an undeserved fortune with her title attached. She is dressed in a brief costume of flowered silk, although not so abbreviated as the dress worn by her more sophisticated, civilized prototype. A wreath of flowers is in her hair, and her feet, too, are bare.* TEE HEE, *her companion, is another very attractive young woman, with more vivacity than* QU TEE, *but not as much general charm. Her dress is patterned after that of the princess, although not so rich.* QU TEE *is by no means in love with* MUTT, *but not having had an opportunity of inspecting any more desirable specimens of the genus beau is accepting him as a husband without comment.* MUTT *is plainly shaken out of his blasé indifference upon her appearance, and he struts about like a turkey-cock. Gushingly.*) Ah, sweet flower of the Kannibal Islands, greetings from your future papa-in-law.

QU TEE. Hello, Mush. Where's Father?

MUSH. The most illustrious person is taking his siesta, fair Bird of Paradise.

QU TEE. Well, you'd better tell him that I was sitting up in my perch in a cocoanut tree, and saw a boat with two men coming toward the Island.

MUSH. I will advise his serene highness of what

your bright eyes have discovered. Possibly they are missionaries.

TEE HEE (*innocently*). I do hope so. It's such a long time since we had any really good missionary stews. You had better tell the Royal Chef to have a fire made under the Royal Stew Pot.

MUSH. Ah, missionaries are indeed salubrious to the digestion.

(*Exit* MUSH, L.)

MUTT. Ah, Qu Tee, what wonderful eyes you have. I'll bet nobody else on the Kannibal Islands saw the approach of our dinner delicacies. What sharp sight you are gifted with.

QU TEE (*laughingly*). I don't know so much about that. If my eyes are all right there must be a terrible looking lot of men on this Island.

MUTT. Why do you say so, darling little Elephant Ears?

QU TEE. Because if I ever saw anything looking half-way like a man I would never consent to marrying you.

MUTT. Haw! You're spooshing me! That's what you're doing—spooshing me.

(*He shakes his forefinger at her daintily, and* QU TEE *dismisses the subject as hopeless. Enter* CO-CO, L., *followed by* ABA, ABADABA *and* ABADABADABA, MUSH *and the* ROYAL GUARD. *In the reverse of the order named his wives range from very young and peppy to very old and vinegary.* CO-CO, *himself, is a wizened specimen of human-*

ity, but of royal mien notwithstanding, for his orders are given in a manner that presupposes unquestioned obedience. There are six of the Royal Guard, dressed only in breech clouts, and armed with feather dusters. Co-Co *ascends to the throne;* Abadabadaba *sits beside him;* Abadaba *sits at his feet, and* Aba *meekly disappears in the folds of the curtain.* Mutt *salaams indifferently.*)

Co-Co (*repeating a ritual*). And *who* is king of the Kannibal Islands?

Chorus. Co-Co!

(Co-Co *nods his head as pleased as though this were entirely spontaneous.*)

Co-Co. And who is it that all love and all admire for his intellectual qualities?

Chorus. Co-Co!

(Co-Co *smiles fondly upon his admirers.*)

Co-Co. And who has all of the virtues and none of the faults?

Chorus. Cuckoo!

Co-Co. What's that! What's that!

Mush (*diplomatically*). A typographical error, your majesty; should be Co-Co!

(Co-Co *takes his seat on the throne, and* Qu Tee *walks up to him.*)

Qu Tee. Good-afternoon, dear Father.

Co-Co. Greetings, fairest turnip of the turnip-patch.

QU TEE. Did Mush tell you what I found for your supper?

Co-Co. Dost mean the two missionaries? (QU TEE *nods her head delightedly.*) Truly, sweetest onion of the onion-bush, the last missionary we had gave me indigestion for a week.

TEE HEE. No, your Majesty, he was not a missionary—he was a Republican.

Co-Co. Ah, yes, I remember now. Republicans never did agree with me. They are so tough and hard to digest.

QU TEE. But I feel sure that the two whom I saw in the boat will be very tender. One of them, in particular, looked *very* tender.

Co-Co. Well, you can't judge a steak by the way the cow looks at its calf. Tender glances don't mean tender cutlets.

QU TEE. Don't you think you had better send your own personal Royal Guard down to the beach to welcome the fresh groceries to the Kannibal Islands?

Co-Co. Very well put, dearest pickle of the pickle-grove. (*To* MUSH.) See to it, you old fried Mush.

MUSH (*to* ROYAL GUARD). Go down to the beach and invite the two young men who get out of the boat to stay with us for dinner. Tell them that it is being arranged wholly on their account.

(*He chuckles at his conceit. Exit* ROYAL GUARD, L.

Everybody follows the guard to the wings, and

stand looking offstage to see the capture of the victims. While they have their backs turned GALLEGHER *and* JONES *enter,* R. GALLEGHER *is a typical go-getter. He wears a loud, checked gray suit, pearl gray derby, pearl gray spats; diamonds sparkle from his tie and fingers.* JONES *is a nondescript, runty man, who is useful in taking loads off* GALLEGHER'S *hands, as at present, for he is loaded to the guard rails with an assortment of hand-bags, suit-cases and sample cases, and is not himself visible until he drops his burdens on the ground.*)

GALLEGHER (*noting the backs of the Islanders*). Ah, I'm glad to see your backs again.

(*The Islanders turn and regard* GALLEGHER *and* JONES *in astonishment.* Co-Co *walks downstage.*)

Co-Co. How did you get on that side of the Island?

GALLEGHER. Were you expecting me to come in on *that* side? (*He points* L.)

Co-Co. Naturally we did.

GALLEGHER. Well, that's exactly why I came in on *this* side. (*He points* R.)

Co-Co. You surprise me.

GALLEGHER. Sometimes I surprise myself. Sometimes I even surprise my friend General Jones, here; don't I, General?

JONES. De only time you *don't* surprise me is when you don't do anything *to* surprise me.

MUSH (*suavely*). We were just saying that we were looking forward to having you for dinner this afternoon.

JONES (*to* GALLEGHER, *in alarm*). Did you hear dat?

GALLEGHER. Did you say *for* dinner?

Co-Co. Yes, *for* dinner.

GALLEGHER. You possibly mean *to* dinner.

JONES. Oh, in *all* probability you mean *to* dinner.

Co-Co. No,—*for* dinner.

JONES (*to* GALLEGHER). And you told me that these people were vegetarians.

GALLEGHER. No, I told you that they were raised on milk.

JONES. So was I but I eats meat now.

GALLEGHER (*to* Co-Co). Are you the President of this Island?

Co-Co. President? No, I never heard of such a thing.

JONES. Shucks, Go-Getter,—dat gentleman's de mayor.

Co-Co. I don't know what you mean by mayor.

GALLEGHER (*to* JONES, *significantly*). *Very* dumb. (*To* Co-Co.) Well, maybe you are the chief of police, or dog catcher.

Co-Co. You talk in riddles. I never heard of such things.

GALLEGHER. Well, how do you rate around here, anyhow?

Co-Co. *I* am the *king*.

GALLEGHER (*to* JONES). Oh, shucks, this boy

ain't nothing but a king. I been wasting my time under de impression dat he had some influence in local affairs. (*To* Co-Co.) Well, I'm sorry dat I didn't understand dat in de first place. I would like to talk to the Ace, or the Joker if you play with one in your deck.

MUSH (*to* Co-Co). Ah, your indigestible Majesty, perhaps *I* had better deal with this entrée.

JONES (*to* GALLEGHER). Did you hear him call you an entrée? Entrée means boiled meat. I'm going away from here.

(JONES *starts to leave, but* GALLEGHER *holds him back.*)

GALLEGHER. Now don't let this cut-up scare you. Just watch me strike him out on three pitched balls.

JONES. You can't do nothing in this league. The umpire is on the other team's payroll.

MUSH. My friends, it is possible that you do not understand how things are handled on this Island.

GALLEGHER. That, coupled with the fact that we don't care, permits me to take up the next subject on the program.

MUSH. Not entirely! You see, this august personage—father of the Sun, nephew of the Moon and son of the Stars—is his imperial majesty, King Co-Co, Monarch of the Kannibal Islands; ruler of our great and glorious empire—the mightiest nation on earth.

GALLEGHER. Did you ever hear of the United States of America?

MUSH (*after a moment's thought*). No, I never did.

GALLEGHER. Well, just the same, I'm telling you that you've taken in too much territory. But go on with your story.

MUSH. And his wonderful Majesty has decreed that to-day his daughter, the princess, and my son ——

GALLEGHER (*who has been paying no attention to* MUSH *due to catching sight of* QU TEE *for the first time*). Oh, boy, look at the Cutie!

QU TEE (*who has been exhibiting the greatest possible interest in the breezy* GALLEGHER). How did you know my name?

GALLEGHER (*not understanding, but hiding the fact*). Why, say, Cutie, did you think for a moment that I would live on this island five minutes without calling on the local representative of Mr. Ziegfeld's follies?

QU TEE. I don't know what you are saying, but I love to hear you say it.

GALLEGHER. I just *know* I'm going to admire your taste.

QU TEE. You must be a very wonderful man in your country.

GALLEGHER. Well, modesty will not permit me to say more than that I am *very* well known.

JONES. Entirely too well known. That's why we had to come to this dump.

(GALLEGHER *kicks* JONES *on the shin.*)

GALLEGHER. Why, the two biggest cities in my

country almost had a fight as to which of the two was my birthplace.

JONES. Yes, New York claimed that he was born in Chicago, and Chicago swore that it happened in New York.

(*Business of* GALLEGHER *shutting* JONES *up.*)

QU TEE. Are you a married man?

GALLEGHER. Nope—travelling man.

QU TEE. You must know *every*thing.

GALLEGHER (*modestly*). Well, *almost* everything.

JONES. And what he doesn't know, he won't admit.

GALLEGHER. In my country *I* can push a little button like this (*Makes motion of pushing electric button.*) and make a bottle light up.

JONES. And so can anyone else who pays their electric light bill.

(GALLEGHER *kicks* JONES *in the shin to quiet him.*)

MUSH. Hear him, your Iridescent Iridescense. He lies! *No* one can make a bottle light up.

GALLEGHER. And I can make a wagon run faster without horses than you people can trot on the fastest animal.

JONES. And so can anyone else that owns a broken-down Ford. (GALLEGHER *hushes him up.*)

Co-Co. Truly, thou art either a wonderful magician or a marvelous liar.

GALLEGHER (*perceiving the increased interest in his tale*). I can fly in the air like the birds.

JONES. If you've got enough money to pay the aviator for the trip. (GALLEGHER *hushes him up.*)

QU TEE. Ah, I adore your ability as a doer of great deeds.

MUSH. I envy his ability as a liar of great lies.

GALLEGHER. I can ride beneath the waves in a boat, and never get wet.

JONES. Unless the captain of the submarine throws him overboard.

(GALLEGHER *glares at* JONES.)

CO-CO. Truly, it looks as though a new Prime Minister were about to be elected.

(MUSH *realizes a new and sudden danger to his statecraft.*)

MUSH. Why, your supreme Soup-bone, surely you do not credit the ravings of this lunatic?

GALLEGHER. And I can spit on the hottest fire and put it out.

JONES. If I don't locate a drink pretty soon, I'll spit cotton.

MUSH (*suddenly interested*). So you can put the hottest fire out just by spitting on it, can you?

JONES. Something tells me my boy friend has just overspoke himself.

(MUTT *takes* MUSH *aside and whispers in his ear.*)

GALLEGHER (*puckering his lips and expectorating*). Ping! One little spit and out goes your fire.

JONES. Small lies don't interest him. When he lies, he lies by the acre.

Co-Co (*impressed*). By my idiotic ancestors, you must be a great soothsayer.

GALLEGHER. Soothsayer? Why, I'm the greatest soothsayer that ever lived.

JONES (*taking* GALLEGHER *aside*). Say, Gas-bag, what is a soothsayer?

GALLEGHER. Soothsayer is high brow for bull-slinger.

JONES (*to* Co-Co). And not only that, but he's the greatest one that ever *will* live.

GALLEGHER (*to* Co-Co). My best friend and severest critic!

Co-Co. Then thou must become my Prime Minister ——

GALLEGHER. I accept the nomination.

Co-Co. —when you give me an exhibition of your marvelous magic.

JONES. Sunk with all hands on board.

MUSH. Ah, your Wiseness, wisely said. And I will set the task for his magic.

Co-Co. What would'st suggest?

MUSH. Let him spit on the fire we have built under the stew-pot, and if he fails (JONES *shudders.*) we will have stewed liar for our supper.

JONES (*to* GALLEGHER). Here's where you get stewed without touching a drop.

QU TEE (*to* GALLEGHER). Ah, this is indeed a terrible test. Suppose that by some dark magic you should fail?

JONES (*aside*). *Suppose* he should fail! This evening's menu will be headed by dark meat.

GALLEGHER (*to* MUSH, *calmly*). Is that the fire under that pot? (*He points offstage,* L.)

MUSH. And quite a pretty blaze.

GALLEGHER. Well, I suppose that a second-rate bush-league Prime Minister would call it so, but it is really too small to justify my serious consideration.

JONES. Hot dawg! He refuses to recognize anything less than a three-alarm fire.

MUSH. Upon second thought, it does seem inadequate for *your* powers. We'll just make it a little bigger. (*He claps his hands sharply.*)

JONES. Out at first! (*Enter the* ROYAL COOK, R. *He wears a chef's cap and an apron to distinguish him from the rest of the royal household.*) I'll take a hot-dog with plenty of mustard.

MUSH. Cook, we have a particularly tough piece of meat to cook this afternoon, so I think that you had better make the fire *twice* as big as it is now.

COOK. Me ketchum! (COOK *walks over to* JONES *and feels his arms and legs appraisingly.* JONES *does not catch the full significance of this at first, but it dawns on him speedily, and he pushes the* COOK *away and menaces him with flying fists. The* COOK *falls back in alarm.*) Me ketchum! Heap tough dinner. Heap hot fire.

(*He essays to feel* JONES' *approximate tenderness*

again, but exits in the face of the determined opposition of the potential stew-meat.)

MUSH (*rubbing his hands together gloatingly*). Now, mighty magician, we will have a fire in a minute that will be worthy of even your powers as a spitter.

GALLEGHER (*to* QU TEE). Say, Cutie, when does we get married?

MUTT. Qu Tee gets married this afternoon—but to me!

GALLEGHER. Was that the program?

MUTT. In another hour it will be all over.

GALLEGHER. Well, I arrived just in time, didn't I?

QU TEE (*soulfully*). *Just* in time.

(JONES *takes* GALLEGHER *by the coat-tail, and drags him aside, while* QU TEE *gushes to* TEE HEE *about her lover.*)

JONES. Say, you fool coon, do you realize that we have a lot of running to do in the next few minutes?

GALLEGHER. Why get all het up running?

JONES. To keep from getting all het up *stewing.* What you mean telling dat *nice* gentleman dat you can spit on a fire and put it out? It was all right talking about electric lights, and automobiles and airplanes and submarines, because dey don't know what you're talking about—but fires is dere long suit. Dat one under dat stew-pot has got me perspiring and it's twenty-five feet away.

GALLEGHER (*patiently*). Use your brain, nigger! Why did we come to dis island?

JONES. We come on what you described as a non-stop selling trip around de world.

GALLEGHER. Exactly. A world non-stop selling trip.

JONES. Well, de non-stop fliers done run out of gas.

GALLEGHER. No such thing. What's in dem sample cases?

JONES. Our stock in trade,—which our customers will distribute amongst demselves whilst dey're picking us from between dere teeth.

GALLEGHER. Not a chance. You just find dat case with them Pyrene fire extinguishers and watch my spit.

(JONES *looks at him a moment stupidly, and then slaps his leg happily.*)

JONES. Play ball! Excuse me, brother. Spit yo' stuff.

(JONES *opens one of the suit-cases, and takes out two fire extinguishers, which he hands to* GALLEGHER.)

GALLEGHER. Give a man a trunkful of Yankee inventions, and no matter if he's a deuce spot at home he will be one of the ace cards anywhere else on earth.

(*Enter* COOK, R. *He walks over to* JONES, *unable to restrain his ruling passion, and feels of his arms*

and legs again. JONES *bears it tolerantly, however.*)

JONES. Back up, Chef, back up. My hot-dog days are over.

COOK (*to* MUSH). The fire roars.

MUSH. Very good. Now kindly conduct this *wonderful* magician to it and let him spit on it, and if he fails to put it out, just add an onion and serve piping hot.

COOK. Dinner will be served in ten minutes.

GALLEGHER. Then get your can-opener ready, for the meat course will not show up.

(*Exit* COOK, R., *followed by* GALLEGHER.)

MUSH (*walking up on the throne beside* Co-Co). Now your Majesty will see how these tramp magicians fall down on the job. Only good union magicians can deliver the goods, and even as good as I am, I can't spit on a fire and put it out.

Co-Co (*whose attention has been riveted to the departed* GALLEGHER). Look!!!

(*He points offstage,* R. *Everybody looks.* JONES *throws his hat in the air.* MUSH *grits his teeth and mutters curses.*)

QU TEE. Oh, what a wonderful spit!

Co-Co. Marvelous.

MUSH. Curses.

(*Enter* GALLEGHER, R., *followed by the awe-struck* COOK.)

GALLEGHER. The chief of the fire department reports the blaze under control.

Co-Co. You are indeed a wonderful magician, and I appoint you my Prime Minister.

QU TEE (*to* GALLEGHER). You deserve a lot of credit.

JONES. And so does Mr. Pyrene.

Co-Co. Come with me to the Royal Palace, and we will talk over affairs of state. (*To* MUSH.) Be prepared to show an account of your stewardship and turn over your office to the new Prime Minister.

MUSH. As your Majesty wills.

JONES. And don't forget the keys to the cellar.

(*Exit* KING Co-Co, *and wives, followed by* ROYAL GUARDS, GALLEGHER *and* QU TEE, L.)

MUTT (*petulantly*). There, now, see what you've done?

MUSH. *I*—what have *I* done?

MUTT. You've ruined everything, that's what you've done.

MUSH. Bah! What does a little thing like this matter to me?

MUTT. *Little* thing? Do you call losing your job a little thing?

MUSH. Ah, ha! And how about our little revolution?

MUTT. True, I had forgotten our little revolution.

(*Enter* MONK, R.)

MUSH. Well, slave, is everything in readiness?

MONK. Everything is ready, your Excellency.

MUSH. Are the revolutionists all armed with feather-dusters?

MONK. Every one, your Excellency.

MUSH. And have the weapons of the King's Royal Guards been stolen?

MONK. They are defenseless, your Excellency.

MUSH. Then hold them in readiness for battle. Spare no one but the Princess and the beautiful maid Abadabadaba. (*Exit* MONK, R.) Sweet Mutt, you go and get out of danger. If you get in the way somebody might step on you. (*Exit* MUTT, R.) Now, I will just leave my declaration of war lying on the Royal throne, and within five minutes I will be King of the Kannibal Islands.

(*He takes note from his belt and places it on the throne. Exit* R., *gloating. Enter* Co-Co, *followed by* GALLEGHER, QU TEE, TEE HEE, JONES *and wives. The wives walk to their accustomed seats,* —JONES *and* TEE HEE *walk over* R., *and* GALLEGHER, KING *and* QU TEE *walk down* C.)

GALLEGHER. Why, King, your business is in *terrible* shape. Just to think,—you have no income tax, no inheritance tax, no war tax, and no automobile tax!

Co-Co. Ah, but we have no automobiles.

GALLEGHER. What of it? In my country we have no good roads, but we've got a bearcat of a good-roads tax. Why, say, I'll increase your income five hundred per cent. in the next sixty days.

QU TEE. Ah, but you are indeed wonderful.

GALLEGHER. Aw, shucks, you ain't heard nothing yet. (*To* Co-Co.) Say, Kingie,—how do you keep track of your wives, anyway? They all sound alike to me.

Co-Co. Well, you see, the King has to number his wives instead of naming them. My first wife is Aba, which is our number one; my second is Abadaba, which is our number for two, and the third is Abadabadaba, which is our number three.

GALLEGHER. And can you only have three wives?

Co-Co. Oh, no, I am permitted any number I desire, but I get tongue-tied if I try to say anything longer than Abadabadaba. Permit me to introduce my harem. The peacherino sitting with me on the throne is Abadabadaba. (ABADABADABA *curtsies.*) Abadaba is my second wife. She is getting a little fat now, and so she sits at my feet. (ABADABA *rises clumsily and curtsies painfully.*) And Aba, my first wife, has been around the place so long that it pains me to look at her, so she has to sit behind the throne to keep my eyes from being affected.

(ABA *sticks her head out of the curtains, and favors him with a toothless grin.* ABADABADABA *notices letter on the* KING'S *seat, and picks it up.*)

ABADABADABA. Your Majesty, someone has left a letter on your throne.

(Co-Co *walks over to the throne, sits down and reads*

the letter. His face registers indifference, surprise, unbelief and fear.)

Co-Co. Ye Gods! I am betrayed.

(QU TEE *rushes to his side, and the whole gathering is in a turmoil.*)

QU TEE. Heavens, what is the matter?

GALLEGHER. There, now, King, don't lose your shirt. Never say die. Heads up, the game ain't over until the last man is out.

Co-Co. Listen! (*He reads.*) You are warned that unless you step down from the throne of Kannibal Island you will be thrown off. The whole army is in revolt, and I am in absolute power. Only your Royal Guards remain to you, and we have stolen their feather dusters. We will attack in five minutes. Signed MUSH, King-elect of the Kannibal Islands.

GALLEGHER. Well, he certainly works fast.

JONES. Yes, and you and me better work faster. Let's go!

QU TEE. Oh, wonderful magician, save us.

Co-Co. Save us, and my daughter will be yours.

GALLEGHER. Well, that's an idea, anyway.

JONES. Save your own hide, big boy. You can't spit on a revolution.

GALLEGHER. What's one revolution per day to a guy that does twelve hundred revolutions per minute?

Co-Co. Ah, but they've stolen our feather dusters.

GALLEGHER. What's that got to do with it?

Co-Co. You see, the Kannibal Island people are terribly ticklish, and we fight with feather dusters, and as soon as the revolutionists get their dusters under my defenseless Guards' ribs, they will be tickled into surrender.

GALLEGHER. Let me think a minute. (*He does.*) Ah, I have it! General Jones, just bring that sample case there (*Points.*) and we will fix the Royal Guards so that they will lick that bunch without a snicker. (*To* KING.) Where are your troops stationed?

Co-Co. Qu Tee, show the gentleman the Royal Barracks.

QU TEE (*to* GALLEGHER). Will your magic save them?

GALLEGHER. The magic of the good old U. S. A. will deliver the goods.

Co-Co. Not a moment is to be lost.

JONES. Yeh, quit cheering yourself and get busy.

GALLEGHER. You just go with Qu Tee and give each one of the Royal Guards one of them tickle-proof vests in that case, and then give each one of them a sheet of fly paper that you will also find in it, and tell them to go out and do a little stick-up work. (*Exit* QU TEE *and* JONES.) Now, King, just pack up your troubles in the old kit bag.

Co-Co. Here comes someone carrying a white flag. (*Enter* MUSH, R., *carrying flag of truce on a stick.*) Well, traitor, what do you want?

MUSH. Now, none of that talk, old fool. We don't want to be hard on you unless you make us. Unless you surrender at once, I will attack and tickle the ribs out of your guards.

Co-Co (*shuddering*). Oh, what a terrible death to die.

GALLEGHER. Applesauce. In five minutes your old revolution will be so gummed up that you won't be able to sit down in six months.

MUSH (*to* Co-Co). Is this *your* answer?

Co-Co (*plainly worried*). I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do.

GALLEGHER. Just tell this bird to put salt on his tail and leave the rest to me. (*He looks off,* L.) Look, here come your Royal Guards, ready to win the battle. (*Enter* ROYAL GUARDS, L. *Each man is now encased in a very long "straight-front" corset, which covers him from breast to knees. In the hands of each is a 12 by 18 sheet of paper, with the words FLY PAPER printed in large letters on it. They come to attention in front of* Co-Co.) Now, your Majesty, just observe how your Big Time Magician works his magic.

(*He approaches one of the guards with his fingers wiggling tantalizingly.*)

Co-Co. Oh, don't do that. You'll tickle him to death right before my eyes.

GALLEGHER. Not at all. He is protected by my straight-front magic.

(*He tickles the* GUARDS *to their intense astonishment, without inducing a giggle.*)

CO-CO. Marvelous, the battle is won.

MUSH. Curses, the revolution is lost.

GALLEGHER. Forward men, and as soon as you see the whites of their eyes, slap 'em in the face with your fly paper, and throw 'em in the ocean.

(*Exit troops,* R. MUSH *drops on his knees before the* KING.)

MUSH. Mercy, oh noble King. Do not put me in the soup.

CO-CO. Well, I need a new wife, but I can't count higher than Abadabadaba, so I will let you live ——

MUSH. Ah, thank you, noble Lord.

CO-CO. —with Aba!

(ABA *sticks her head out from the curtains and grabs* MUSH *by the hair.*)

MUSH. Ye Gods! A fate worse than death.

(*He disappears into the curtains with* ABA. *Enter* QU TEE, TEE HEE *and* JONES. *The latter two have their arms entwined about each other.*)

CO-CO. Ah, daughter, our noble Prime Minister has saved us by his wonderful magic.

TEE HEE. They fly—they fly!!

GALLEGHER. I'll say so. They're full of fly paper. (*To* QU TEE.) Come to Papa.

CO-CO. Take her, my boy, and I'll take Tee Hee for the next Mrs. Abadabadaba.

JONES. Not so fast, King. I've put her under the spell of a little magic of my own.

(TEE HEE *walks into his arms.*)

Co-Co. Ye Gods! The curse of civilization is upon me. (QU TEE *and* GALLEGHER *embrace, and*)

CURTAIN

XI

A TEN MINUTE MUSICALE

XI

A TEN MINUTE MUSICALE

This is a straight musical number, intended to vary the program and keep the comedy motif from becoming monotonous, and providing a lull in laugh-getting efforts.

The act should be "dressed-up" as much as possible, and an air of elegance should obtain throughout, the nearest approach to frivolity being light vocal numbers of the concert school.

The stage should be set with a piano with a beautiful scarf draped across it and a bench large enough for two in front of the keyboard. A pedestal floor-lamp should stand at the left of the keyboard, and shed its rays on the ivories. A handsome living-room chair is on the right of the stage. If possible, soft gauzy draperies should enclose the stage, and soft lights illuminate the scene.

The scene is in "two" and the curtain rises on an empty stage.

Enter pianist, left. This performer should also be a capable vocalist and may be of either sex. If male, he should be dressed in formal evening clothes. If a lady, a dainty evening gown, with a filmy drape across her shoulders.

Pianist walks to piano, sits down and plays introduction to song.

Soprano begins to sing solo offstage. It is sug-

gested that an Indian love song be used for the opening number, modern contemporary examples of the Cadman school being very effective. A baby spot light should pick the soloist up at her entrance, and remain on her until her exit. If an Indian number is not used, some other selection should be sung that permits a little " dress-up " to the act. Some song that is simple, tuneful and characteristic of some people or nation should be used, if possible. For instance, " Roses of Picardy " done in French peasant costume. Care should be taken to avoid operatic airs or heavy music of any kind. Where a song is used that does not have racial or other characteristics that automatically suggest typical dress or " props," an evening gown, notable for its simplicity, is the logical costume.

A short encore should be sung of the same type or character of the first number, or a popular encore if the singer is attired in evening dress.

The singer should study to achieve an effect of friendliness to the audience. Smiling,—nodding her head at dainty passages,—inclining her head at romantic passages,—using her hands gracefully. In short, what is called " showmanship " should be cultivated, for the audience will respond to the evidence of friendly inclination and quickly receive the act to its heart. This taking of the act out of the hackneyed Song Program classification, coupled with simple tunes and lack of ostentation is the key-note of the whole thing, and should be worked for indefatigably.

At the close of the encore, the singer should bow, or curtsey happily, as if complimented and delighted at unexpected applause, and exit quickly.

The spot light shifts to the pianist, who plays a solo.

If the pianist is capable of a little piano specialty of amusing keyboard tricks, his selection should be one that brings such accomplishments into play. Lacking this a light but showy number should be the selection, always bearing rigidly in mind that heavy, concerto-like pieces are taboo and deadly tiresome to a minstrel audience and will be received with only polite applause. Light, frilly, tuneful compositions, on the other hand, will prove immensely popular and appreciated. This artist should also take his audience into his rendition, being careful not to treat the keyboard too seriously, but divide his or her attention between the ivories and the audience, being familiar with the first and pleasant to the second. The encore should be some musical novelty on the order of ringing of chimes. No especial number is suggested as the musical library constantly changes and novelties can always be secured with little effort.

Enter soprano. She is picked up by the spot light on her entrance, having made a change of costume. She sings another song,—a short, light thing that brings a breath of gayety to the proceedings. A change of costume is not necessary, but exceedingly helpful as adding a professional touch and dressing up the act which does more than anything

else in the world to hold the attention of the audience. If the singer has other character songs it would be proper and smart to have the change of costume represent the character of the new number. Spanish songs require a theatrical costume, but the songs themselves are usually too florid to receive other than polite response on the part of the audience. The costume idea is a big consideration, however, and the artist should search endlessly for numbers that will prove out of the ordinary. At the same time, never lose sight of the fact that heavy numbers are taboo.

If the soprano is a pianist also, she should, at the conclusion of the foregoing numbers, sit down beside the pianist and play a duet. If, however, she is not a performer of sufficiently solid attainments she should make a bow, exit, and another pianist enter and play the duet. Again light numbers should be played. Piano duets, carefully selected and played by good performers are a genuine musical treat, and can very easily "stop the show" in the parlance of the theatre. Typical examples will be found in "Over Hill and Dale," by H. Engleman, published by Theodore Presser, Philadelphia, and "A Southern Cake Walk," by L. Leslie Loth, published by the White Smith Music Publishing Co., Boston, New York, Chicago. These two numbers, indeed, will prove entirely satisfactory for this place on the bill.

In the event that the vocalist has taken the second seat at the piano for the duet, and the regular

pianist is capable of vocal rendition or can play some other instrument, he or she should exit at the conclusion of the duet, and the soprano sing a Lullaby number to her own accompaniment. This is a very gracious and graceful gesture, and one that will add to the variety of the act and still further build up the good-will of the audience. More modern songs of the "Mighty Lak a Rose" school may be employed, or that perennial favorite itself used.

Enter pianist who either sings a song or plays an instrumental solo on some other instrument than the piano; but in the event that none of these things can be done well it would be better for the vocalist to exit at the conclusion of her lullaby number, let the regular pianist resume activities at the keyboard, and introduce a third person capable of either instrumental or vocal rendition. A precocious child or a boy soprano might be used, although the first is liable to prove self-conscious and the latter stiff in manner. A young lady, with enough youth to put on rompers and sing a kid song of the type made familiar by various vaudeville and revue "sister" acts is also a possibility.

The Finale should be performed by the two original artists and may be just a little more ambitious than the preceding numbers, giving the vocalist the opportunity of illustrating her real accomplishments. Even so, the strict adherence to the light idea will give the happiest results.

The encores should be taken by all the partici-

pants in the act, the acknowledgment being limited to bows to the audience and to each other.

The routine described in this musical act will be found to be practical and of sufficient variety to move along without a hitch and keep the audience in high humor.

CURTAIN

XII

THAT REMINDS ME

A Revue of Good Stories

XII

THAT REMINDS ME

CHARACTERS

THE POSTMASTER.
THE JUDGE.
THE SCHOOLMASTER.
THE DOCTOR.
THE INDIAN.
THE RANCHER.
THE LAWYER.
THE NEGRO.
THE LITTLE BOY.
THE LITTLE GIRL.
THE TRAVELLING SALESMAN.
THE OTHER TRAVELLING SALESMAN.
THE AMERICAN.
THE ENGLISHMAN.
THE ITALIAN.
THE JEW.
JUPITER.

Scene in two. The stage is divided into two equal halves, upon which the action alternates.

The simplest method of staging the act is by using a drop-curtain with two equal openings about eight feet wide, either opening being closed, when desired, by a portable covered frame which is set up directly behind the drop and slid back and forth, closing the opening required by the action.

A somewhat more pleasing idea is worked out with a drape curtain having two openings, each being approximately one-third of the entire width of the curtain, viz.:—if the curtain is twenty-four feet wide, for instance, the openings should be eight feet from

either side of the stage, and each have an eight foot opening. At each opening the curtains must be fitted with individual draw cords, to permit independent opening and closing.

The third, and most artistic staging, is to play the scenes behind a gauze drop, with a light-proof space in the middle about four feet wide, and setting the stage directly behind the open portions of the gauze.

The lighting arrangement is the same in either of the above three stagings. Flood lights are located directly behind the *center* of the curtain, drape or gauze, and pivoted from left to right as required. If footlights are used at all they must be divided into two equal series, so that they burn in front of the half that is "blacked-out" and vice versa in front of the half upon which the action is in progress.

The right half of the scene shows the entrance to a typical country store and post-office, in front of which is a rude pine bench for the village loafers. The left half of the stage shows, in quick succession, five different sketchy scenes, upon which the stories told by the idlers in front of the store materialize.

Although this sketch calls for a large number of characters, it can be reduced in a number of ways. For instance, the POSTMASTER and SCHOOLMASTER can both be eliminated, their lines being assumed alternately by the JUDGE and the DOCTOR. The NEGRO character works in two scenes in any event. The RANCHER may double for the AMERICAN in the last flash, and the same holds true for the LAWYER

and the ENGLISHMAN. Further, any "bit" that proves impracticable or uncastable, may be lifted bodily from the sketch.

SCENE 1.—*In front of store.*

(*Seated on the bench in front of the store are the* POSTMASTER, *the* JUDGE, *the* DOCTOR *and the* SCHOOLMASTER, *lazily intent on whittling soft pine boards in the warm sunshine of the baby spot. The left of the stage is blacked-out.*)

POSTMASTER. Wall, Jedge, thet wuz a right curious case you tried this mawnin'.

JUDGE. Yes, Postmaster, it was very hard to decide it and do justice to both parties.

SCHOOLMASTER. Seems to me that any two men in their right minds would know enough to handle a simple business deal in a simple, business way.

DOCTOR. Men, I have found, are right curious creatures,—which is the main reason why lawyers make such a good living.

POSTMASTER. You're right there, Doc. I remember one time when I was keeping a store out in Indian Territory in the old pioneer days, there was a wealthy rancher who acted as a sort of unofficial banker for all the cowboys and Indians in the neighborhood. He never kept any books, but I never knew of him to make a mistake in his accounts. One time, however, an old Indian came to pay him fifty dollars that he had borrowed from him ——

(Scene on right blacks out, and the left of the stage lights up.)

SCENE 2.—*Entrance to a Western Dance Hall, with hitching-post in front of it. The* RANCHER *is discovered leaning against the hitching-post, picking his teeth reflectively. He is a typical Westerner of the pioneer type; wide-brimmed tan Stetson hat; flowered vest; frock coat and striped trousers tucked into high boots.*

(*Enter* INDIAN, L. *He is just Injun, long-haired, bronzed, indefinitely dressed in cast-off garments of the whites.*)

RANCHER. Hullo, John.

INDIAN. How!

(INDIAN *takes roll of bills from pocket.*)

RANCHER. Ketchum heap big bank roll.

INDIAN. Ugh! Ketchum heap seven 'leven.

(INDIAN *peels off five bills from his bank-roll, and hands them to the* RANCHER.)

INDIAN. Me payum fifty dollars.

(RANCHER *takes money indifferently and stuffs it into his pocket carelessly, resuming the excavation of his teeth thoughtfully.*)

RANCHER. O. K. John. That makes us even, Stephen. Glad to accommodate you any time.

INDIAN. Me ketchum receipt?

RANCHER. Haw! haw! John. What you want with a receipt? I ain't gonna try to collect it from you again. You don't need no receipt from me in this world.

INDIAN. Me ketchum receipt. Mebbe you die.

RANCHER. Then you would sure be safe.

INDIAN. Mebbe me die.

RANCHER. All the same. Living or dead, I won't try to collect it again.

INDIAN. Me ketchum receipt! Mebbe me try to get in happy hunting grounds. Bookkeeper look at um book an' no lettum in. Mebbe say, "John, you owe um white father fifty dolla."

RANCHER. Shucks. Just tell him you paid me.

INDIAN. Mebbe bookkeeper say, "Where ketchum receipt?"

RANCHER (*amused*). Well?

INDIAN. Me look like um fool chasing you all over hell to ketchum receipt!

(*Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 3.—*In front of store.*

(JUDGE, DOCTOR, POSTMASTER *and* SCHOOLMASTER *are laughing heartily at the* POSTMASTER'S *story.*)

JUDGE. That's a good 'un. The Indian is something like the Negro in that he never knows when the white man will try to put something over on him. And he's most suspicious when the white man is trying really to help him. I remember one time

in my court a darkey was up for stealing chickens. He couldn't afford to hire an attorney, so I assigned a brilliant young lawyer to defend him without cost. The young man made a Jim-dandy plea, but the colored boy was suspicious to the end.

POSTMASTER. Tell us about it, Judge.

(*Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 4.—*Judge's bench and witness stand in court-room. The* JUDGE *has made a quick cross-over and sits in his chair. The* NEGRO *sits in the witness chair,* L., *and the* LAWYER *stands,* R.)

LAWYER. Your Honor, this is one of the saddest examples of human injustice that has ever come to my attention. Here we have an innocent, unsophisticated Ethiopian, fallen innocently into the ruthless coils of the law, involved in a remorseless legal prosecution, through absolutely no fault of his own. Why, your Honor, even if we had not proved an unquestioned alibi, one look into that face would be bound to convince your Honor that this man could never restrain, harbor or purloin, with malice aforethought, any fowl, bird of the air, or other feathered flock. No, your Honor, this man is as innocent as a new-born babe, and I move that my client be forthwith dismissed from custody.

JUDGE (*to* NEGRO). Did you hear what your lawyer said?

NEGRO. Jedge, suh! He sho' sounded noble. What did he say?

JUDGE. He has demanded that you be dismissed from durance vile.

NEGRO. Did he, sho' nuff? Well, suh! Ain't dat de truf? What do it mean, Jedge?

JUDGE. It means that you are acquitted.

NEGRO. Well, suh!—Sho' nuff? (*Pause.*) Jedge, kin I axe one question?

JUDGE. Certainly, if you wish.

NEGRO. Do dat mean dat I got to give back de chickens?

(LAWYER *clasps his hand to his forehead and staggers back. Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 5.—*In front of store.*

(*The four cronies are laughing at the* JUDGE'S *story. He has made a quick cross-back to his seat on the bench.*)

JUDGE. That darkey will never believe to his dying day anything else than that his lawyer was directly responsible for his going to jail for six months. Just like children, Negroes are. Just as quaint in their beliefs, and as unexpected in their viewpoint as a child.

DOCTOR. Well, I don't know about that, but when you get to talking about children you're stepping on *my* toes, for I contend that, subconsciously, children are just about the wisest lot of folks on earth. Every day, nearly, my practice discloses some bit of worldly wisdom in a child that is convulsing. I re-

member one day, about a month ago, when little Mary Smith got a nice new baby brother, she was very proud of him, and told everybody she met about the new addition to the family. She ran across little Luther Gibbs on the street, and tried to lord it over him, but Luther was not easily impressed. (*Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 6.—*A street.* LUTHER *is discovered untangling a piece of string. Enter* MARY, R.)

MARY. Oh, Luther, guess what I got?
LUTHER. Candy?
MARY. Oh, no! Better than candy.
LUTHER. A new doll?
MARY. No,—a new *brother.*

(*She preens herself upon having delivered a bombshell into the enemy's camp.*)

LUTHER (*stolidly*). Where did you get him?
MARY. Doctor Jones brought him.
LUTHER (*indifferently*). Oh! *We* always take off of him, too. (*Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 7.—*In front of store.*

(*The quartette is laughing at the joke.*)

POSTMASTER. When Luther was doing his guessing, it reminded me of a guessing contest between two travelling salesmen, who were marooned at a flag station on a railroad waiting for the one accom-

modation train that day to carry them back to civilization. They had tried everything they could think of to keep time from dragging too heavily, without a great deal of success, and finally one of them suggested —— (*Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 8.—*A Stop-Look-Listen sign overlooking a railroad track. Discovered two travelling salesmen, sitting on their suit-cases.*)

FIRST SALESMAN. Why doesn't this one-hoss railroad run a half-way decent schedule through this jungle?

SECOND SALESMAN. Gosh! Wish I had something to read.

FIRST SALESMAN. Tell you what I'll do. I'll tell you riddles for a dollar.

SECOND SALESMAN. Riddles? My gosh! That's a heck of an evening for a great big healthy man. What will you suggest next? Playing post-office?

FIRST SALESMAN. Aw, wait a minute! You don't know the kind of riddles I mean.

SECOND SALESMAN. A riddle is only a riddle, but a railroad like this is a joke.

FIRST SALESMAN. Listen to me. If I ask you a riddle, and you can't answer it, *I* gotta answer it myself.

SECOND SALESMAN. What's the idea?

FIRST SALESMAN. Keeps you from asking riddles that there ain't no answers to. Now I'll just back my judgment for two bones.

SECOND SALESMAN. Let's keep the wimmin and children out of this. Make it five bones,—it's *your* idea.

FIRST SALESMAN. You're on. You're first.

SECOND SALESMAN. Lemme see. (*He thinks a minute.*) Well, how is it that when a rabbit digs a burrow in the ground he don't leave any dirt around the top of the hole?

FIRST SALESMAN. Let me get this right. Why don't a rabbit leave any dirt around the top of a hole when he digs a burrow in the ground?

SECOND SALESMAN. That's my riddle, and I stick to it.

FIRST SALESMAN. Well, I give up.

SECOND SALESMAN. And so *I* gotta answer it, eh?

FIRST SALESMAN. Or else ——

SECOND SALESMAN. Well, it's very simple. He begins digging underneath the ground.

FIRST SALESMAN. Is *that* so? Well, how does he get underneath the ground to begin with?

SECOND SALESMAN. W-e-l-l—that's *your* question.

(FIRST SALESMAN *looks at him blankly for a moment, and then his mouth drops open and he hands the* SECOND SALESMAN *a bill. Quick blackout of scene.*)

SCENE 9.—*In front of store.*

(*The quartette is laughing at the joke.*)

SCHOOLMASTER. That reminds me. One time I

asked an old Negro man why it was that the Negro race never had any outstanding characteristic like other peoples of the world. He explained the riddle to me by telling me that once upon a time, when Mount Olympus was the fountainhead of the Universe, each nation sent an ambassador to the great god Jupiter, or Zeus as some called him, to ask for some favor for his nation. Well, it seems ——

(*Quick black-out of scene.*)

SCENE 10.—*The throne of* JUPITER *on Mount Olympus. There is an azure drop at the rear, and the throne of* JUPITER *tops the scene.* JUPITER *is seated on his throne. He is a mighty man, with long, white whiskers and dressed in a long, flowing robe, with a golden crown on his head, and a golden sceptre in his hand.*

(*Enter* ENGLISHMAN, L.)

ENGLISHMAN. Oh, mighty Jupiter, I am sent by the great nation of England.

JUPITER. And in what manner does England wish to eclipse all other nations?

ENGLISHMAN. Oh, mighty Zeus, we wish to have great dominions, extending to all corners of the earth, and a mighty navy to guard our possessions.

JUPITER. So be it. (*He waves his sceptre over the* ENGLISHMAN'S *head.*) England's navy shall rule the waves, and the sun shall never set on her

flag. (*The* ENGLISHMAN *bows and exits,* R. *Enter* JEW, L.) And thou, oh, Jew! What dost thy people crave for their heritage?

JEW. Oi! oi! Meester Jupsiter. All we askit of you is that you teach the Yiddisher peoples to live on less than they earn, save their money, and some day, maybe, inherit New York City.

JUPITER. Oh, wise Jew! Thy meekness shall inherit New York. (JUPITER *waves his sceptre over the* JEW'S *head, who exits,* R. *Enter* ITALIAN, L.) Well, Wop, and what does Italy ask of Jupiter for her heritage?

ITALIAN. You betta my life. You smarta de man. My sunny It she asks you letta her runna da fruit stand, shina da shoe, and you nev' maka da wop sing "Yes, we gotta no garlic."

JUPITER. So be it, Wop. (*He waves sceptre over* ITALIAN.) I have spoken. (*Exit* ITALIAN, R. *Enter* NEGRO, L.) Ah, who have we here? The noble Ethiope! Well, Sunshine, what does your native Africa desire?

NEGRO. Suh?

JUPITER. I said what is it that you desire as your heritage?

NEGRO. Cap'n, suh, says which?

JUPITER. Didn't you come up here with the Englishman?

NEGRO. Oh, yassuh, yassuh! Lovely gemman, too.

JUPITER. And were you not in the party with the American?

NEGRO. Lawd, boss, I wasn't in no other party else but.

JUPITER. And the Jew and Italian, wast not with them also?

NEGRO. Yassuh, boss, yassuh. Dat I was. Came all de way wid dem gemmen. Yassuh, Cap'n. We all came together.

JUPITER. Well, they have all asked for something, and I have granted to each the thing he did'st request.

NEGRO. Well, well!

JUPITER. So, good Ethiopian, what do *you* want?

NEGRO. Me? Oh, *I* don't want *nuthin'*, boss. I just came along for company.

(*Quick black-out, and*)

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